



Results of waste review will be revealed this summer

SEARCH IS ON FOR NEW TIP SITE

Report by David Cosgrove

DUDLEY borough needs two tips but is struggling to find a new location for one major refuse site, according to Dudley Council's deputy leader.

Councillor David Vickers said: "It would be sensible to have two sites in the borough, but at the moment we're struggling to find one, let alone two. "I don't know where the ideal spot is but we're looking across the borough and eventually we'll find somewhere."

Plans to move waste operations to a central depot in Leys Road, Brierley Hill, were scrapped last year and cabinet member Councillor Karen Shakespeare has confirmed that the council is now considering alternatives.



David Vickers

The results of a review will be confirmed in the next few months, she added. Councillor Shakespeare, cabinet member for environment, said: "Council officers have come up with a number of sites and we are looking at those options. We will be putting forward a report with those options later this summer. "We have been looking at sites across the borough that are more viable and don't have the problems that the Leys depot did in terms of access and traffic."

Rejected

The former Labour ruling group wanted to sell off the Birmingham Street tip in Stourbridge and make Leys Depot a central base for waste disposal. That plan was rejected when the Conservatives took charge of the local authority last year. There had been concerns about generating extra traffic on roads near the Merry Hill shopping centre.

Councillor Vickers, who is a representative for Halesowen South, added: "To my mind the Stourbridge tip has got one or two things wrong with it. It's very close to houses and there can be tailbacks onto the ring road. However, so far there isn't anywhere that's come up that is ideal."

KEY DONATION TO HELP FLOODED CHURCH RECOVER



David O'Connor has offered to donate his National Organ to the Lea Brook Methodist Church, which was hit by flooding

A KIND musical pensioner from Halesowen is looking to donate his keyboard to a 169-year-old church that was damaged by flooding after 10 million litres of water swept through a Black Country street.

Water reached up to two feet in Lea Brook Methodist Church when a digger broke a water main right outside the building in Wednesbury last month.

The church bore the brunt as water swept through and damaged the floor, registrar documents, ovens and prayer books, reaching two foot in height.

Two fundraising pages, set up to cover the costs of the repairs, have so far raised more than £400 but minister Rev Trevor Pratt expects the costs to be more than £100,000 and said it could up to six months before the congregation can move back in.

Now Halesowen man David O'Connor is looking to donate his organ/piano to the church. The 72-year-old said: "I just think if the organ does somebody some good, then that's great news. The organ is full working order and is a limited edition. It has two tiers, one is an organ and the other a piano. I can play it, I just think it is better use to them."

"If people are in distress, I would like to do anything I can to help the church."

Rev Pratt, 67, added: "We want to thank Mr O'Connor for his kind gesture."

Donations can be made at www.gofundme.com/leabrookchurch or via Facebook.

POLICE

Five arrested after machete assault

FIVE men were arrested after a man suffered head injuries during an assault with a machete in a Halesowen residential street.

Police were called to reports of a man being assaulted by two other men in Andrew Road at around 1am on Friday.

The Official West Midlands Police Dog Unit Twitter account tweeted that there had been a violent disorder in Halesowen in which a male had been assaulted with machete. The man was taken to hospital but is now recovering at home.

Caroline Schubert, for West Midlands Police said: "Four men, one aged 28, two aged 29 and one aged 32, were arrested."

COURT

Boy charged over Merry Hill attack

A SCHOOLBOY has been charged over an alleged hammer attack on a teenager at Merry Hill shopping centre.

A boy, aged 17, suffered facial injuries at around 1pm on Saturday while the centre was packed with shoppers.

A 16-year-old, who cannot be named because of his age, has been charged with possession of an offensive weapon in a public place. He appeared before magistrates on Monday.

CRASH

Collision victim has died in hospital

A FATHER has died in hospital eight days after his classic car was involved in a collision in Stourbridge.

Andrew Holdaway, aged 62, died after his 1950s Dellow MK1 car was involved in the smash with a Ford Mondeo on Norton Road on Bank Holiday Monday. Police want to trace three men in the other vehicle, which fled the scene.

INSIDE

TRIO ON ART OF COMEDY



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Standing up for our communities



Diane Davies

SINCE The Chronicle launched more than 30 years ago, we have covered every aspect of life in our communities. We have reported on triumph, disaster, joy and sorrow. We shine a light on decisions made by those in power – and stand up for our readers.

In recent years, technology has revolutionised the way people consume news and information. This in turn has prompted massive changes for our industry.

Throughout these changes, The Chronicle has continued to focus on the local news and issues and stand for the same core principles. We are committed to delivering the very best news service, keeping you in touch with news and events from around the Black Country and Staffordshire.



Our journalists are dedicated to producing accurate, interesting stories that inform and entertain. We will hold those in power to account, exposing bad decisions to public scrutiny, but praising them if they get it right. Our reporters are out and about every day, at council meetings, court hearings, public events and much more.

There continues to be plenty of debate over Press regulation in this country. Only last week, an amendment to the Data Protection Bill could have endangered the free Press. The Section 40 legislation would

have required publishers who are not signed up to State-backed Press regulator Impress – funded by Max Mosley – to pay the costs of legal action brought against them, whether they won or lost.

It was defeated but the threat to the freedom of the Press refuses to go away. We are proud of the work we do and are committed to the highest standards of journalism, which is why we are a member of Ipso, a robust, independent regulator that upholds the Editors' Code of Practice.

Finally, a word of thanks to our readers for your support, feedback and contributions. Thank you for helping us keep in touch with the communities we serve.

Diane Davies, Head of Weekly Titles

How we bring all the local news to your door

THIS week local newspapers across the UK, like the Chronicle, are taking part in Local Newspaper Week.

Every Chronicle edition is the product of a combined effort from a committed team – from the reporters and photographers to the advertising team selling space and the van drivers, newsagents and delivery boys and girls who distribute the paper.

As part of Local Newspaper Week we take a look at some of those responsible for ensuring your Chronicle hits the street each week.

The reporter

Having started as an apprentice, Tom Oakley is one of a team of reporters and photographers working across the Black Country and Staffordshire.

He covers all aspects of news, including 'calls' stories from the emergency services, human interest stories, and reporting about local government – even taste tests!

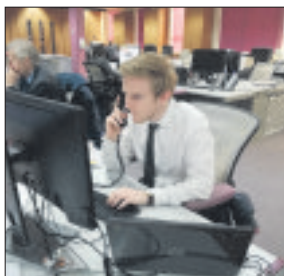
The sub-editor

Sarah Cowen-Strong is one of the final pieces in the editorial jigsaw after stories have been filed by reporters and checked by Chronicle editors.

She says: "Our aim is to make sure stories are legally and factually correct and well-balanced. We need to ensure there are no spelling mistakes and the correct grammar is used. We also write the headlines."

The features supervisor

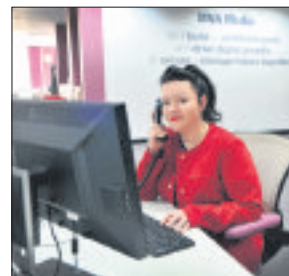
Paula Richards is a features supervisor, specialising in the business and education sectors. Her job involves contacting schools, colleges and universities to help them promote open days and their digital marketing strategies, as well as planning advertising features and supplements.



Reporter Tom Oakley at work



Tony Rudge and wife Gel



Features supervisor Paula Richards



Sarah Cowen-Strong is one of the team of sub-editors



Duncan Rose checks over the edition in the print room

The press crew

On a typical day the huge printing presses at our Kettleby print shop churn out about six million pages.

Duncan Rose is team leader in the plate room, and his responsibilities range from maintenance of the ma-

chinery, supervising deliveries, and overseeing the printing.

The newsagent

Each morning Tony Rudge wakes up while most of us are still in bed. He arrives at his Sedgley store to find the daily papers waiting for him at 6am.

Sport often dictates newspaper sales, with more copies of our sister, daily paper the Express & Star flying off the shelves when Wolves win, he said.

Your Chronicle is delivered by a team of dedicated men and women, boys and girls who receive a bundle of papers each week to distribute.

Tata Steel looks to sell firms amid restructure

TATA Steel Europe is looking at selling off two of its non-core businesses. It follows a portfolio review by the steel group of all its businesses to assess strategic fit and future potential.

It has now begun a process of seeking buyers for five business units which supply products to niche markets, allowing the company to continue to strengthen its focus on strategic strip products and markets.

They include Engineering Steels Service Centre in Wolverhampton, which is a stockholder and processes engineering steels and employs 20, and Walsall-based Firsteel, which coats steel for kitchen bakeware and has a 50-strong workforce.

Hans Fischer, chief executive of Tata Steel's European operations, said: "These potential sales follow the successful sale of other non-core businesses in recent years."

Focus

"The customer bases for the businesses being sold are distinct from the rest of Tata Steel Europe. We want to find the best owner for each of these business units who can focus on their needs to help them realise their full potential."

"These potential sales would enable Tata Steel Europe to focus investment and management resource on its core strip products business and strategic markets."

Tata Steel currently employs about 750 in the Black Country, including its Steelpark site at Wednesfield where 450 work, and Brierley Hill, as well as the service centre at Horseley Fields and Firsteel in Brockhurst Crescent.

UKIP switch puts Tories in charge

THE Conservatives have taken full control of Dudley Council after the last remaining UKIP councillor in the borough jumped ship to secure the Tories the narrowest of majorities.

The Conservatives and Labour were left locked on 35 seats each following dramatic local elections in Dudley. It had set up the prospect of a crucial vote this week to decide which party would control the council.

But it emerged on Monday that UKIP councillor Kerry Lewis has joined the Conservatives to give them the vital extra seat needed for the all-important majority.

The Tories had run a minority administration with the support of UKIP, who have now been completely wiped out in Dudley following a disastrous election performance.

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HOME VISITS AVAILABLE

£5m revamp restores park and builds new pavillion

WORK will begin next month to transform West Smethwick Park as part of a £5.2 million project.

It will include a new two-storey pavilion in the centre of the park, replacing the original refreshment rooms that were demolished in the 1980s.

Many of the park's historical features, including the Grade II-listed Chance glass memorials, drinking fountain and the airmen's memorial, will be restored as will the park's original entrance gateways.

The work is being funded by a £4.5m award from the Heritage Lottery and Big Lottery Funds' Parks for People programme and around £600,000 from Sandwell Council.

The council's cabinet were due to discuss final preparations for the project at a meeting last night (Wednesday), including procurement of an organisation to run the pavilion and the disposal of an old grounds maintenance depot.

Sandwell Council's new cabinet member for leisure Councillor Bill Gavan said he was excited to be bringing forward such huge changes for the park.

"This project is going to transform West Smethwick Park," he said. "At the pavilion we will have a café, public toilets and space for events, classes and exhibitions. The pool will be improved and we'll have new outdoor gym equipment."

Open day after refurbishment

EXTRA safety measures have been installed as part of a £1.2 million refurbishment for a retirement housing complex in Brierley Hill.

Now residents and service users at Myles Court are to be treated to an open day event as a 'thank you' for being patient during refurbishment.

Celebrations will take place on May 25 between 10am and 4pm with entertainment and refreshments and local celebrities in attendance.

The refurbishment at Myles Court is part of Housing & Care 21's commitment to investing £27 million a year up to 2021 in improving the quality of their retirement housing across the country. All 87 Myles Court apartments have had a new kitchen and bathroom fitted and a new fire alarm.

Delays warning

RESURFACING work started on a main road in the Black Country this week. Drivers have been warned of possible disruption on Oakham Road, Tividale, between 9am and 3pm until Wednesday, May 23. Diversions will be signposted.

Normandy hero is given final salute



D-Day veteran Geoffrey Russon

"TRUE hero' Geoffrey Russon was given a guard of honour by fellow D-Day veterans at his funeral in the Black Country.

The funeral service was held at Lawrence Lane Methodist Church in his home town of Cradley Heath on Monday. The great-grandfather died aged 94 on April 22.

His proud family describing him as a 'true hero'.

Daughter-in-law Yvonne Russon, from Stafford, said: "He was honest, hard-working, and never took anything for granted."

"He never saw himself as a hero. What

he did, he did for King and country, that's what he used to say.

"He was just the most patient person going, and so family orientated. The most important thing to him was family."

Battle

Mr Russon was called up to National Service at the age of 18 and served with the Royal Army Service Corps in the Second World War as a driver during the Normandy offensive. He saw action in Operation Overlord, the code name for the Battle of Normandy.

He was also part of the force that liberated Bergen Belsen concentration camp.

Geoffrey, who belonged to the Birmingham branch of the Normandy Veterans, was handed the Legion D'Honneur by France in 2015.

Fifteen D-Day veterans attended the funeral with five standards. The French Embassy paid tribute on its Twitter page.

Mr Russon leaves widow Nora, 90, son Christopher and daughter-in-law Yvonne, five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Inspection has raised concerns over care home

A CARE home where staff lacked training and accidents were 'inconsistently' recorded has been placed in special measures.

Safeharbour, in Hagley Road, Pedmore, has been rated inadequate by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) – despite being rated as good less than two years ago.

The care home now has six months to improve or the CQC will take action, which could lead to the home's closure. The home's safety and leadership were given the bottom rating of inadequate, while its effectiveness, responsiveness and care were rated requires improvement by CQC inspectors, who visited in March.

Concerns raised by inspectors in a report include a lack of oversight by the provider and registered manager, lack of staff training in specialist areas and that people were not fully protected from harm and abuse.

Failed

The report said: "The provider had failed to implement systems and processes to keep people safe from avoidable harm and abuse. We saw a number of potential safeguarding concerns were not being identified by the provider from incidents, restraints or accidents, which included injuries to individuals. The provider had failed to notify the local authority and the Care Quality Commission of these events."

"Staff told us they had received training in how to safeguard people from abuse and said if they were concerned for people's safety, they would report this to the registered manager immediately. However, we found no evidence of staff reporting these concerns following the incidents that we identified."

"People's healthcare needs were not routinely met and we saw people's access to healthcare services was inconsistent and healthcare plans were not fully completed."

The home referred to Dudley Council for comment. Council leader Councillor Patrick Harley said: "Safeharbour is a privately run company. We are working with the CQC, families, residents and the owners of Safeharbour to address the issues raised in the CQC report."

MP joins Hugh on charity cycle ride



Dudley North MP Ian Austin and veteran cyclist Hugh Porter MBE are read to ride round the Wrekin

AN MP will be getting in the saddle for a cycling challenge this weekend. Dudley North's Ian Austin will take on the Banks's Round the Wrekin Sportive on Sunday in aid of Compton Care.

The sportive was launched in 2016 and has attracted hundreds of cyclists in its first two years.

There are three routes to tackle – a 100-mile tour, a 64-mile route and a shorter 24-mile ride, which is named after Black Country cycling hero Hugh Porter MBE, who won Commonwealth gold in 1966.

"It's an honour for someone like Ian to sign up," said Mr Porter. "Ian is a keen cyclist and does

quite a bit with Stourbridge Cycling Club. It's great that someone like Ian with such a busy schedule can find the time to do this. It proves how highly regarded the cause is."

The Labour MP will tackle the 64-mile route into Shropshire then back to Kingswinford.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Protect bus pass call by Warley MP

A BLACK Country MP has urged the Government to protect pensioners' bus passes.

During a debate in Westminster, John Spellar defended the bus pass scheme. The Warley MP called on the Government not to take 'any action to change the availability of bus passes for pensioners'.

In the debate, Mr Spellar said the scheme helps keep many pensioners active. He said: "There are lots of studies now on the impact of loneliness on older people. This scheme helps to get people out and about, and maintains their health for much longer."

Shopping park is sold for £53.6m

LONGBRIDGE Shopping Park in south Birmingham, on the site of the former MG Rover works, is being sold for £53.6 million.

Developers St Modwen have agreed the sale to Columbia Threadneedle Investments on behalf of Zurich Assurance.

The park includes the largest Marks & Spencer store in the West Midlands at 150,000 sq ft and a 95,000 sq ft Sainsbury's store, plus Smyths Toys, Boots, Poundland, Mountain Warehouse, Holland & Barrett, Carphone Warehouse and Specsavers.

New £644k pitch is state-of-the-art

THE beautiful game is looking better than ever after the opening of a new £640,000 artificial football pitch at Dudley's Dell Stadium.

The floodlit 3G playing surface was officially opened by the Mayor of Dudley last Wednesday.

The event also included a football match between Wolves All Stars and Dudley Town FC, led by Jody Craddock and Pete Thompson respectively.

The pitch cost around £644,000 made up of £543,927 from the Premier League and FA Facilities Fund, plus £100,000 from Dudley Council.

Oh we do like to be beside the zooside

HIT the beach on Castle Hill as Dudley Zoo gets set to host seaside family fun next week.

A temporary attraction named Ow Bin Ya Sands is set to transform the attraction's Sensory Garden into a beach play area, just in time for the May half-term holiday.

Around 80 tonnes of sand is being piled into a large wooden frame, so youngsters can make sandcastles from May 26.



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4 College grant helps students work abroad

Halesowen Chronicle Thursday, May 17, 2018

A COLLEGE has received more than 100,000 Euros of funding for students to get work experience in Europe.

Halesowen College has secured been handed 116,000 Euros from Erasmus+ to help 48 vocational students complete work experience in partner schools in Italy, Germany, Spain or France.

Students have already completed placements as part of the programme – with sports students going to Barcelona and business and IT (information technology) students to Munich and Trento in Northern Italy.

Principal David Williams said: "I am delighted with this fantastic opportunity for our students which allows us to build on existing relationships with our European partner schools."

Benefit

Cait Gerrard, a Level 3 IT student, has been on work experience in the IT department of an investment company in Munich. She said: "Taking part was a huge benefit for me. It gave me an insight into living independently and budgeting my finances."

"It also allowed me to explore living in a different country and learning a new language along the way."

"The work experience itself made me explore more sides of IT."

Order order a pint or two at Westminster

AN Halesowen brewery got that Commons touch when its Through & Off Session IPA was chosen as a guest ale in the House of Commons' Strangers Bar. Fixed Wheel Brewery's IPA was chosen by Halesowen and Rowley Regis MP James Morris to showcase its ale. He said: "It has been a pleasure to bring this fine beer from my constituency to Westminster."

New recording studio to focus on offering a music alternative

Classic conservatoire gig for Sir Lenny

SIR Lenny Henry took to the stage to narrate Peter and the Wolf in a special concert held in Birmingham aimed at introducing youngsters to classical music.

The Dudley-born actor, writer, comedian and charity campaigner appeared at Birmingham City University's Royal Birmingham Conservatoire to narrate Sergei Prokofiev's classic.

Sir Lenny, who is the chancellor of Birmingham City University, appeared alongside the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Pops Orchestra, playing the various characters in the performance.

Alongside Peter and the Wolf, the orchestra transported the audience to 'a galaxy far, far away' with music from the original Star Wars film trilogy.

Conducted by Chris Houlding, the musicians also conjured images of darting through the skyscrapers of New York with Danny Elfman's Spider-Man theme, and then whisked them into the domain of cowboys, cowgirls and the American West with Hoe-Down by Aaron Copland from the 1942 ballet Rodeo.

Sir Lenny said: "Being the Chancellor of Birmingham City University is a great gig. Not only do I get to mingle with all the fantastic students and see first-hand how our research is transforming lives, they also let me take centre stage at our new £57 million Royal Birmingham Conservatoire."



Sir Lenny Henry with the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Pops Orchestra

A NEW recording studio with rehearsal rooms and a gig venue has opened its doors in Stourbridge.

The Howling Rooms Studio marked its official opening with a launch party featuring an eclectic mix of live electronic music, from sludge metal to experimental pop.

Owner and founder, Luke Fewtrell-Bowers, opened the venue as he thought the town needed a place to offer something different for gig-goers – who fancy a challenge when it comes to their music tastes.

He said: "Stourbridge has been lucky over the past few years to have a really great underground music scene, especially with the promotion collective Carnegie Club bringing bands to the area, whom I have been involved with in the past."

"But with music venues in the area moving away from the loud and experimental, it's getting harder to find venues to put on these kinds of bands in the Black Country, let alone the town of Stourbridge."

Heritage

"Stourbridge has a rich musical heritage for churning out bands who dare to be different, take Ned's Atomic Dustbin and Pop Will Eat Itself for example."

"We must have a place in the area where we can champion that and offer a place to express that creativity, which is why we will put on a host of live events hosting UK and also local talent."

Luke and the Howling Rooms are also looking to support local talent wanting to get started in the industry. There are also plans for a podcast which will feature interviews, music and features on acts. Call Luke on 07757 083525 or email howlingrooms@gmail.com.

Diesel days at the SVR heritage line

THE Severn Valley Railway is preparing to host the UK's largest diesel locomotive celebration.

The Spring Diesel Festival will be taking place from today (Thursday) to Saturday.

It brings together an eclectic mix of heritage and mainline diesel locomotives of all shapes and sizes from all across the country.

The Engine House Visitor Centre at Highley will host the Thursday Social from 7pm tonight, an evening of music, food and drink with local band One Tree Canyon and the SVR's Hobsons Real Ale Bar. Entry is free with a Spring Diesel Festival Thursday Rover ticket, including journey to and from Highley.

Over the weekend there will be 12 visiting locomotives from three Class 20 engines dating from the 1950s and '60s to a Class 88 locomotive, unveiled in 2016.

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Project gets £9.6m to help the homeless

A £9.6 million homelessness fund to help get rough sleepers off the streets of the Black Country and surrounding areas has been set up.

The Government funding will pay for 225 properties across the region – including 75 across the Black Country – which specialist street intervention teams will use to house the homeless.

It will run as a pilot scheme for three years and is based on the Housing First model, which has successfully reduced rough sleeping in Finland.

The project will be overseen by the West Midlands Combined Authority and the West Midlands Mayor Andy Street's homelessness task force, alongside housing providers and homelessness charities in the region. It was signed off by James Brokenshire in his first act as Housing Secretary.

Mr Street, who visited Helsinki last year to see the scheme in action, said: "I can vouch for the positive impact it has on supporting rough sleepers and came back determined we trial it here in the West Midlands. It can provide people who are homeless with a new start, somewhere to call home. They will be given support to help them rebuild their lives. Now the funding has been confirmed we will work with charities and local authorities on getting the pilot up and running."

Major new gym centre proposed for school

PROPOSALS have been submitted to Dudley Council for a purpose-built gymnastics centre and fitness suite at Ellowes Hall in Lower Gornal.

The college has won £100,000 of funding from Sport England for the project, which would see a gymnastic centre built that could host major events. It would also be the new home for Dudley Gymnastics Club.

Merger of region's mental health bodies is called off

It's a close shave for fundraiser Sam



SODA's Sam Billingham had her hair shaved off by Georgina Dalby to help survivors of domestic abuse

A DOMESTIC abuse survivor has had her head shaved to raise cash in order to spread awareness.

Sam Billingham, who runs support group SODA (Survivors of Domestic Abuse), had her blonde locks sheared in front of supporters. The 38-year-old is now sporting a close-cropped look.

Sam said she hopes the shave will help raise cash and awareness of domestic abuse. Her father John took the first cut before Georgina Dalby of Blaze

Hair salon shaved off the rest of Sam's hair. Sam, who won the Fresh Start prize at the E&S's Great Big Thank You Awards, said: "It does feel very strange – my 12-year-old daughter keeps referring to me as 'Eleven', the character from Stranger Things."

"People kept telling me I was brave to have my hair cut off. But to me, being brave is surviving an abusive relationship."

The money raised on the evening

– dubbed SODA Sam's Shindig – will now go towards SODA Bag of Life campaign, offering essentials for those who need to move to a safe house. The night, at the Hare and Hounds in Wollescote, also featured a raffle, a DJ set and a guest appearance by Megan Reece of The Voice. Sam said the raffle had raised around £150 while her JustGiving fund has topped £385.

SODA has recently opened an office in Halesowen, at the Hope Centre.

A SHAKE-UP of mental health services in the Black Country and Birmingham, aimed at saving £7 million a year, has been cancelled at the eleventh hour.

The plan was to merge Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust.

Under the project called Transforming Care Together (TCT), the partnership was to begin last December. But a statement on the scheme's website said it was no longer going ahead.

In the statement, the decision not to go-ahead was down to 'clinical concerns' after recent NHS guidance said models of care should fit geographical areas, as well as fears over finances.

It said: "The trust boards are very much aware and extremely appreciative of the considerable work that staff have put into TCT and are determined to learn as much as possible from the process and continue to share good practice."

Approved

The idea was thought up in 2015 and a business case was approved by board members in the following year.

By creating a single provider of mental health, it was aimed at improving care and providing a better choice of services across the region. It was said combining work would enable the development of clinical services including research, while also resulting in a more efficient use of resources.

The statement published on the cancellation said: "The three boards have been spending time reviewing the proposals in light of a number of issues arising. The boards of the three trusts have agreed the decision not to proceed." But it did say a 'collaborative' approach across the region should be 'developed further'.

M6 is UK's most deadly motorway

THE M6 has claimed more lives than any other motorway in Britain in the past decade – despite racking up fewer collisions than the M1 and the M25.

The Department for Transport, looked at all reported road incidents on major UK roads between 2007-2016. It found that 160 people were killed on the M6, exactly twice as many as those who died on London's M25 even though it had 331 fewer accidents – 7,342 for the M6 compared to 7,673 for the M25 where 80 died over the decade.

The M5 was the scene of 91 fatalities, 14 per cent more than the M25, despite having fewer than half the number of crashes. Some 154 fatalities took place on the M1.

The analysis of more of Britain's motorways and A-roads revealed that the A38, which runs through Birmingham, had 8,698 accidents – 360 more than any other road in Britain.

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



Mr Men sexist? Just don't talk wet

ANOTHER week, and another burning issue grips the political class. While you might think rising crime, Iran, North Korea, Russia and Brexit would be enough to keep them occupied, but for some reason the Government has decided to declare war on wet wipes.

Now maybe I'm in a minority, but of all the issues I feel strongly about, wet wipes fall pretty low down the list. Occasionally useful on a hot day after putting on sun cream, but overall I would say they do not form a major part of my life.

It seems the problem is that wet wipes are made of plastic, and we all now know that plastic is A Very Bad Thing.

But, at the risk of departing from the received wisdom of the day, the real problem is not the use of plastics, but today's throwaway society. Children who change their mobile phones every year, replacing perfectly serviceable television sets to get the latest gimmicks, the endless updating of computer systems for no significant benefits. All this generates vast amounts of waste, and the irony is it probably the people who consider themselves the most environmentally aware who are responsible.

Walk around your high street, and the chances are you will see "rent-to-buy" shops urging people on low incomes to buy needless gadgets they neither need nor can afford. Watch the series Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away about High Court bailiffs, and you will see virtually every house they visit has a huge, flat-screen TV. And what for? To see Jeremy Kyle in high-definition?

Of course, this is great news for electronics manufacturers in the Far East, but bad news for the engineers and repairmen in this country who used to earn a crust keeping these things working.

But if we really want to protect the planet, we need to get back to making things to last, and maintaining them rather than replacing them at the whims of fashion. And if that means paying a little bit extra to begin with, it will almost certainly save money over the long term.

And it will make a much bigger difference than banning wet wipes.

AND, not to be outdone in the petty meddling stakes, shadow foreign secretary Emily Thornberry – also known as Lady Nugee – has said Mr Men and Little Miss books are "sexist".

Do these people never take a day off? They are books for little children who don't even know what "sexism" is.

I do wonder which character Miss Thornberry would be. Little Miss Busy-Body, perhaps?

Adele gets that sinking feeling as she hits the big 3-0



Car Share – Peter Kay's unscripted version of the sitcom showed its true genius



Splashing out – Adele celebrated her 30th with a Titanic-themed birthday party



Love's Labour's lost – Ex-MP and actress Glenda Jackson out of favour with her party

Kay's simple sitcom is just streets ahead

CONSPIRACY corner. After much research, authorities in Egypt have announced that there is no secret chamber behind the 3,000-year-old wall of Tutankhamen's tomb. Which as every conspiracy theorist knows, means there is.

I LOVED this week's unscripted edition of Car Share (BBC1). I take a wee bit of pride in being one of the first hacks to recognise the brilliance of Peter Kay's creation. Car Share launched in April 2015 and this column instantly hailed it as "clever, lovely, life-affirming stuff." It's just two people sharing a car. As so often in comedy, the simplest ideas are the best.

THE blog version of this column sometimes reminds me of another TV gem, Early Doors. A loyal bunch of customers hang around waiting for the pub (blog) to open. Then they all rush inside and complain about what a crap pub (blog) it is.

DOES she have no brains, no compassion or is she simply badly advised? Adele's choice of a Titanic-themed party for her 30th birthday, with guests dancing in life jackets, was beyond understanding. If any of those guests die by drowning, heaven forbid, in their final moments they will certainly remember that party.

AH, oui. Les événements de soixante-huit. It was fifty years ago today that the youth of Paris rose against their government. I was there. Well, sort of. I was actually there a few weeks later on a school trip being bussed across Paris. The guide pointed out that all the freshly resurfaced streets had once been cobbled. But the rioters tore up the cobblestones to chuck at the police, hence the asphalt. I would like to claim that we Leamington College lads were gripped by the

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



story of a national trauma so violent and so raw that Parisians simply called it les événements, the events. But we were not. We were transfixed by the guy in the open convertible on the other side of the coach. He was driving with a cigarette hanging expertly from his lip, one hand on the steering wheel, the other resting under the miniskirt of his beautiful and adoring girlfriend. You didn't see that sort of thing in Leamington Spa.

SOME of the self-proclaimed Maoists, Trotskyists, anarchists and other revolutionaries who swarmed onto the streets of Paris 50 years ago later swapped their combat jackets for smart suits to become well-paid politicians and officials across Europe. This will surprise you only if you have never read Animal Farm.

I HAVE occasionally suggested that, as the Left and Right of politics get ever more rabid and unselectable, we may live to see a Labour-Conservative coalition government. In an interview, the former Labour MP Glenda Jackson asks: "What party is Jeremy (Corbyn) leading? It's not a party I know." She reckons neither of the two main parties could win an election and "we're on course for some sort of combined government." Watch this space.

THE Quakers seem to be moving away from God. According to research, 14 per cent of them are atheists while 43 per cent are "unable to profess a belief in God." There is talk of drop-

ping mention of God from the guidance notes for Quaker meetings. By coincidence, a new report by the British Journal of General Practice suggests that family doctors, as we used to call them, are being used as "new clergy" by people who are not ill but want something to "give meaning and purpose to life." And there's the snag. The moment you start looking for meaning and purpose, or any sense of created order or fairness in life, you are heading for deep disappointment. Better by far to share a room with a few kindly Quakers, who are excellent listeners and make a damn fine pot of tea.

A READER claims there is no longer a majority in favour of Brexit because moods have changed and the 2016 Referendum was "a long time ago." This is how fake news begins. The vote was a long time ago. Anyway, it wasn't binding on the Government. In fact, did the Referendum ever really happen? After all, we Brexiters are all old, dim and a bit forgetful. . .

THE wonders of food science. How on earth do the boffins produce a yoghurt containing zero fat? Part of the answer may lie in the filling process. I've just opened a yoghurt pot which was barely half full. You may expect some settlement in the packet when it's cornflakes, washing powder or porridge oats, but yoghurt, for heaven's sake? Is it easier to produce a yoghurt containing zero per cent fat if the pot is only 50 per cent full in the first place?

STILL on food, a sudden rise in the price of vanilla is reportedly forcing some ice-cream makers to consider dropping the flavour from their range. I am sure we will struggle by. I can't be the only customer who thinks vanilla is what food tastes of if it doesn't taste of anything else.

TALKING POINT



Pregnant pause is must for smokers

I MUST admit I am not, and have never been, a smoker. Maybe something to do with the fact that my dad did constantly and died young of a heart attack.

Yes he had been told by the doctors to give it up but he just said at the time "What do the doctors know?" Well obviously a lot more than he did.

My daughter and daughters-in-law were very good – although one in fact has never been a smoker – and followed advice to not smoke when they were pregnant.

After all, smoking is a choice decision and your unborn baby does not have that choice, so you have to make the right decision for them.

Good advice, but how many times do you see mums-to-be walking along proudly pushing out their stomachs with a fag in hand or, just as bad, the prospective dad (at least I presume that's what he is) breathing out cigarette fumes all over her.

So even if she has wisely taken the decision to quit for those important months she and the baby are still at risk. Passive smoking can be almost as dangerous.

Our children are so precious and we would surely do everything we can to protect them.

Admittedly some things are out of our hands to an extent – certain illnesses, bullying at school, friendship fall-outs etc, although of course we would do everything we can to prevent it or deal with the situation as best possible.

I cannot pretend that my children – well, two of them – did not smoke but they did not do it in the house and never during pregnancy or in front of the babies/children. Surely that is the responsible attitude.

Recently, while walking along Wolverhampton's main street, I saw not one but two moms leaning over their babies in the prams with a fag in their mouths. Cigarette ash in your buggy . . . erm, very healthy.

And how many times do you see on television children who are suffering from some awful illness.

Probably, like me, you secretly cross your fingers and think please, there but for the grace of God etc.

But how would you feel if your thoughtlessness or selfish attitude was to blame for one of those illnesses?

I know that when they are adults your children have to make their own decision as it is out of your control but not while they are young and need your guidance.

Give your child the best start in life. If you must smoke, do it away from them – and most definitely not in pregnancy!

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What about the dangerous cyclists?

HAVING read the story in The Chronicle May 3 concerning the safe distance the West Midlands Police Road Harm Reduction Unit stipulates a vehicle should allow when overtaking a cyclist, this raises a question. When there are parked cars/vans along both sides of the road and there is traffic in both directions, especially on narrow roads, how are vehicles supposed to overtake without either going along at the same speed as the cyclist or risking running into oncoming traffic?

I notice there is no mention of cyclists who weave about from side to

side while going along. Or those that weave in and out of traffic in order to get to the front of the queue at traffic lights in order to either turn left against the lights or to race off as soon as the lights change, obstructing the vehicles behind who then cannot get past.

I also note there is no mention of those cyclists who persistently cycle on the footpath, even in full cycle gear, putting pedestrians at risk and who seem to think that said pedestrians should move out of their way. This is especially dangerous because of all the

cars and vans that are parked across the footpath, in a lot of instances leaving no more space than that which allows a single person to struggle to get by.

Since a large number of these are on double yellow lines why is it neither the council or the police are interested in doing anything about it, since these situations affect far more people than the number of cyclists that are about.

Is it not about time that the authorities put their priorities in order?

MR H SMITH
Halesowen

Get rid of the House of Lords

IT'S not becoming any easier trying to leave the European Union, it is fraught with pitfalls, obstacles, failures and mistakes.

To leave the EU requires persistence and mental toughness, to overcome these problems our leaders must grow a thick skin in pursuit of our freedom voted for in 2016, even more so now that the House of Lords are undermining our PM.

These privileged remonians must be stopped in their tracks, we did not vote to have our decision overturned by another body of unelected peers who are out of touch with us leavers who gave our Government mandate to rid us of the EU club.

The Lords are arrogant trying it on over the will of the people and a sovereign parliament.

We need a vote to close down the Lords once and for all.

MR R F GOODALL
Wordsley

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

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Tour shows need for helmets

DID you watch ITV 4 coverage of the 'Tour de Yorkshire'? How can people who claim that football is the most popular sport say that when you look at the numbers who were watching the 'tour' for free?

It was brilliant. The sun helped to make the viewing of the scenery so good too.

And how many footballers fall down and almost cry for assistance. Did you notice how many cyclists crashed, yet got back on their bikes to finish the race? On a very hilly course!

One of the riders in the women's 'Tour de Yorkshire' crashed, and broke her helmet into four pieces. Yet she was just taken to hospital for a check-up, according to the race commentators.

And people say that the wearing of such helmets should not be made compulsory!

PETER COLE
Kingswinford

Time to think again about Hippodrome

NOW that Dudley's latest local election results have resulted in no overall control, it's time that the Labour and Tory councillors started listening to the people they represent.

In other words saving Dudley Hippodrome instead of coming up with plans to demolish this building.

Just think councillors, you have this iconic building, Dudley Zoo and the Black Country Living Museum all on the gateway entrance to Dudley town.

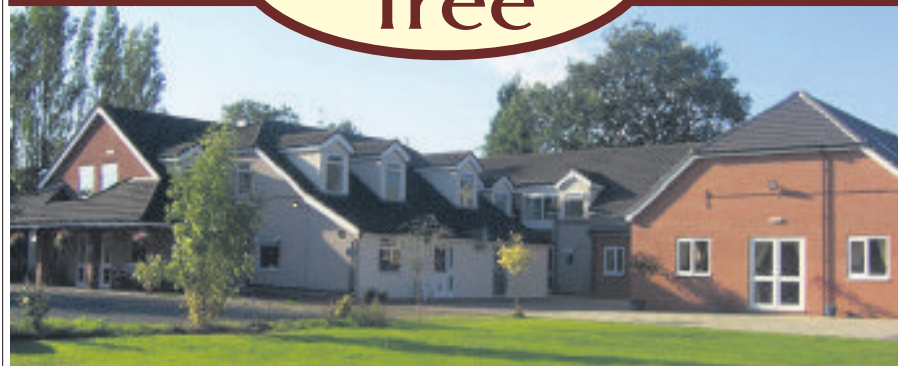
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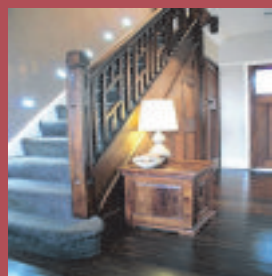
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BT will axe 13,000 jobs to cut costs

BT is to axe around 13,000 jobs as part of a revamped cost-cutting drive. The company said the job losses would mainly affect back office and middle management roles, with two thirds of the cuts set to fall on UK staff.

BT has a strong presence in Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley and West Bromwich, and remains a key local employer. In total, BT employs more than 6,000 people across the counties of the West Midlands.

There are no details yet of what the move means for individual locations around the country. Remaining staff cuts are expected to impact upon BT's operations abroad.

Plans were also revealed to exit the BT headquarters in central London, though another site in the capital is expected to house its head office. The move comes as BT looks to cut costs by around £1.5 billion by the final year of its three-year plan.

The telecoms firm added that it would be hiring around 6,000 new employees 'to support network deployment and customer service'. BT has around 106,400 employees globally with 82,800 in the UK.

The announcement comes nearly a year after the company said it was to axe 4,000 jobs.

BT Chief executive Gavin Patterson said: "Decisions like this are not easy."

Comic trio help with Dementia Action Week

AN award-winning comedy trio will give a tailor-made performance as part of activities to mark Dementia Action Week. The Fizzogs will perform to people with dementia and their carers, friends and families at the Brett Young Dementia Gateway, on May 22. The performance is one of a number of activities to celebrate the national campaign during May 21-27.

Force attracts more than 100 cadets as youth scheme revived

Pair stepped out for Epilepsy Action



Tina Lilly and Mandy Aldridge are raising funds for Epilepsy Action in memory of their friend Susan Hubble

A CRADLEY Heath woman who tackled Snowdon in memory of a friend and then took on the Dudley Trail has raised more than £600 for Epilepsy Action.

Tina Lilly, 40, climbed Mount Snowdon on April 26 in memory of Susan Hubble, who was secretary for amateur dramatics group Startime Variety. She died in February after an epileptic seizure.

Tina followed her mountain ven-

ture by joining fellow Startime Variety member Mandy Aldridge, 52, of Rowley Regis, for the 12-mile Dudley Trail on May 6

Money raised from Snowdon and the Dudley Trail will be donated to Epilepsy Action. The pair had originally set out to raise £200 for the charity but have tripled that with donations still rolling in.

Ms Lilly said: "Our friend and Startime Variety secretary Susan passed

away at the age of 58 earlier this year, so we thought we would get fundraising in her memory. As part of Startime Variety we put on shows to raise money for local charities."

Now Tina and Mandy are planning to climb Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa next year. To support Tina and Mandy in their fundraising efforts, visit just giving.com/crowdfunding/tina-lilly

Around 1,600 people took part in the 38th annual Dudley Trail.

MORE than 100 youngsters have pledged their time to become police cadets.

The young recruits, all aged under 18, will work within five units across the West Midlands after volunteering for the role.

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) David Jamieson reignited the scheme after it came to an end in 1998.

He said: "This was a key promise that I made to the public in my manifesto and I am delighted we have now recruited more than 100 cadets.

"It is fantastic to see how quickly the scheme has grown and how popular it is proving.

"It is now really clear that it is making a real difference to the lives of more than 100 young people in our region."

The cadet scheme, which was an election pledge by Mr Jamieson, was relaunched last autumn as part of the PCC's police and crime plan.

Vital

He said young people acted as a 'vital link' between the force and their peers, with some going on to pursue a career as a police officer.

The initiative aims to build self-esteem, develop leadership skills and provide youngsters with a greater sense of community.

Assistant Chief Constable Sarah Boycott, of West Midlands Police, said: "We are very proud of the success of WMP Cadets since its relaunch last year.

"Cadet schemes are popular and to already be running successfully in four areas of the West Midlands is wonderful for the force, the young cadets and the communities they are a part of. They are a key part of increasing our engagement with local people, while giving us the opportunity to bring police and young people closer together."

Travellers' camp plan put on hold

PROTESTERS rallying against a travellers' transit camp in Coseley have won a battle to stave off the controversial plans.

Council planning bosses in Dudley have agreed to delay making a decision on the plans until they have carried out a visit to the site in Budden Road. The decision has given residents opposed to it hope that the scheme could still be scrapped.

Committee members voted unanimously to defer their decision on the future of the Budden Road playing fields in Coseley despite plans being recommended for approval.

Campaigner Tony Sheldon at a meeting raised issues of contamination and potential job losses for Coseley, as businesses were considering relocating if the plan goes ahead.

The site, expected to cost the council £280,000, would provide 40 caravan pitches for three years.

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'Astle' bridge saga goes on as graffiti covered up

NOW you see it _ and now you don't!

Graffiti paying homage to Baggies legend Jeff Astle was daubed on a bridge named after him in Netherton.

But it was soon covered over with a swathe of black paint.

Primrose Bridge, in Cradley Road, has been known locally as Astle Bridge after the words 'Astle is King' were daubed on it to mark the striker's winning goal against Everton in the 1968 FA Cup final.

And 'Astle is the King' was painted on the bridge last week - lasting no more than 24 hours before it was painted over.

The clean-up is the latest episode in the bridge's footnote in Albion and Black Country history.

The original graffiti was cleaned off by the council in the early 1990s.

But it soon reappeared a couple of days later with the added warning 'Dudley Council please take note'. It was then repainted only to be covered over again.

Play

Meanwhile, three former West Bromwich Albion stars have reunited ahead of a play based on the life of Jeff Astle. Tony Brown, Ally Robertson and Dennis Clarke met up at the Hawthorns last week to discuss their memories of the former Baggies number nine.

The trio were interviewed by Mike Howl, a professional playwright and director who is putting together The Jeff Astle Story, which he describes as "a tribute to Jeff, his life and his career."

The play will be performed at Birmingham's Crescent Theatre in Brin-



The famous graffiti tribute to Albion player Jeff Astle on the bridge in Netherton



Relegation now this - the tribute has been painted over, again

dleyplace from Thursday, May 24, to May 27.

Mike said: "Some of their stories are very, very funny. I was there 50 years ago when Jeff scored in the FA Cup final and making the play is bringing all the memories back."

The much-loved forward scored 174 goals in 361 games for the club - including the winning goal at Wembley

against Everton. All proceeds from the production will go to the Jeff Astle Foundation, set up by his daughter Dawn to help people with head injuries resulting from playing sport.

Mike said: "I was there 50 years ago when Jeff scored in the FA Cup final. If someone had said to me then that I would be writing a play on him then I wouldn't have believed them."



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Ex-Goodyear workers are helping hospital

FORMER Goodyear workers will be helping critically-ill patients as part of a donation to a hospital.

They will be funding a £28,000 Bioquell Isolation Pod, which will enable staff at Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley to treat people with confirmed or suspected infectious diseases, ensuring the highest level of care is provided.

A donation of £9,190 will also be spent on improvements in the Stroke Unit Therapy Room, including a state-of-the-art reminiscence interactive therapy unit.

Chief nurse Siobhan Jordan and critical care consultant Dr David Stanley met Cyril Barrett who runs the 5/344 Transport and General Workers Union Branch Benevolent Fund to receive an overall cheque for £37,190.

Mr Barrett said he was delighted to be able to help the hospital, adding: "It's all about creating this living legacy for those who worked at Goodyear. We are proud to be able to purchase these items for Russells Hall Hospital, and to know that patients will get the benefit for many years to come."

Chief nurse Siobhan Jordan said: "We are grateful for their very generous donation."



Cyril Barrett with critical care consultant Dr David Stanley, Helen Halsall and chief nurse Siobhan Jordan

Sounds like summer in borough's parks

THE programme for the summer season of free outdoor band concerts in the Dudley borough has been announced.

The season of shows will be staged at Stevens Park in Quarry Bank, Mary Stevens Park in Stourbridge and Himley Hall and Park.

At Stevens Park sets for the summer include the Black Country String Band on June 10, Cleobury Mortimer Concert Brass on July 1, and Black Country Brass Band on August 12. Over at Mary Stevens Park the AD Concert Band will perform on July 15, Madi Stimpson Trio on July 29, and Jazz on Tap on September 2.

Himley Hall and Park will host a total of five concerts and the guests will be Alveley Village Band on June 3, Black Country Brass Band on June 24, BJ Concert Band on July 22, AD Concert Band on August 5 and then the Out of the Blue Big Band on August 26. All the concerts will run between 2.30pm and 5.30pm and are free.

Identity of teenaged 'feral' killer is revealed

A 'FERAL' teenager, who assaulted one youth and robbed another three days before he was involved in a fatal burglary, can finally be identified.

This follows a successful application by the Express & Star, sister newspaper of The Chronicle, for the removal of a court ban on the naming of 17-year-old Brandon Phillips.

He continued to commit crime after being involved in the fatal stabbing of 41-year-old Simon Johnson at his home in Netherton.

The cloak of anonymity was lifted by Judge James Burbidge QC, sitting at Wolverhampton Crown Court, who ruled: "I am satisfied that it is in the interest of justice that the restriction be lifted. Brandon Phillips was engaged in a spree of significant crime with one crime leading to another.



Brandon Phillips

Knifepoint

"After the death of Mr Johnson he committed further crime eight days later when he went with others to a park where a youth was held and robbed at knifepoint."

Nine months after that offence the defendant was caught in possession of a knife.

Phillips, from Dunhill Road, Rowley Regis, was locked up for 10 years in January this year after being convicted the previous month by a Wolverhampton Crown Court jury of the manslaughter of Mr Johnson during the early hours of August 11, 2016.

He and 19-year-old Damilola Johnson, no relation to the victim, were stealing cannabis plants from the address in Cradley Road, Netherton, when they woke Mr Johnson, leading to the fatal confrontation.

Phillips admitted being part of a 'feral pack' who assaulted and robbed a string of youths during an evening of violence three days before the fatal stabbing.

He beat up a youth at the Merry Hill shopping centre and, two hours later, robbed a youth, one of four who had their mobile phones taken by members of the gang, which surrounded them at a skateboard park in Old Wharf Road, Stourbridge.

Judge Burbidge told Phillips: "You were out of control in 2016, having abandoned your interest in law-abiding pursuits to the pack mentality and that led to the grave crime of manslaughter."

Mr Tony Nayager, defending, said Phillips was a member of what was effectively a 'feral pack' and was 'deeply ashamed'.

Family picnic planned

THE annual Sandwell Families Big Picnic event is coming to Dartmouth Park on May 31.

Activities for children will include circus skills, story telling, balloon modelling, face painting, and sports alongside arts and crafts.

For more details on the free event, which takes place between 11am and 3pm by the children's play area,, call Sandwell Council on 0121 5694914.

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Drug crook's sentence appeal is dismissed

A CRIMINAL jailed for his role in drug dealing in the Black Country must serve his 10-year sentence, top judges have ruled.

Erion Shyti, 39, was linked to conspiracies to deal in cocaine and also cannabis grown at drug 'factories' in Oldbury and Halesowen. The conspiracy was smashed by police in 2016.

Shyti, of no fixed address, admitted two counts of plotting to supply cocaine and one of conspiracy to supply cannabis. He was jailed for a total of 10 years at Birmingham Crown Court in April last year.

Lawyers for Shyti argued that, because consecutive sentences had been passed for the offences, the total punishment was 'excessive'.

Dismissal of his appeal, top judges at London's Appeal Court said he deserved what he got for conspiracies involving large quantities of illegal drugs.

Judge Michael Topolski QC, sitting with Lady Justice Sharp and Mr Justice Dingemans, upheld the 10-year term.

Jealous bully jailed for attacks on his pregnant partner

A VIOLENT 'bully' who twice attacked his partner while she was pregnant after becoming angry over text messages on her phone has been jailed for a year.

Thomas Cleveland, aged 36, grabbed his girlfriend's face and hit her over the head with a plastic bottle containing ice, leaving her bruised and bleeding, a court heard.

On another occasion, he punched her in the face, again over messages on her phone and on a Facebook page.

Wolverhampton Crown Court was told that he was in breach of a suspended prison sentence for similar domestic abuse offences involving the same victim.

Mr Gerald Bermingham, prosecuting, said the defendant assaulted his girlfriend numerous times after starting an on-off relationship in 2016.

On December 22, at his mother's home in Oldbury, Cleveland challenged his partner over texts on her phone, becoming angry and attacking her so badly she needed medical treatment. He slapped her face, snapping her glasses, pushed her and then punched her in the back and in the face at the house in Eva Road.

Demanded

Less than three weeks later, on January 10, he demanded to see her Facebook page and mobile phone. He pushed her and then struck her over the head with a plastic bottle. On both occasions he was in breach of a 13-month suspended sentence imposed in November for a similar offence of violence against his partner.

Ms Naomi Nelson-Cofie, defending, said Cleveland had no convictions apart from the domestic abuse offences against his partner, who wanted to continue their relationship.

Judge Dean Kershaw told him: "I'm in absolutely no doubt that you're a bully, a man whose jealousy controls his actions. You had not long been dealt with at court on another charge of abusing the same woman, and given a chance by the court, then you assault her again, knowing she was pregnant with your child. You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

Cleveland, of Eva Road, Oldbury, pleaded guilty to two assaults and a breach of the suspended sentence. He was jailed for five months for the assaults and a further seven months for the breach. He was banned from contacting his partner for two years.

Grannies go Bollywood



Dancing Grannies - Fizzogs Deb Nicholls, Sue Hawkins and Jacky Fellows

INTERNET sensations Dudley's Dancing Grannies have been asked to be dance in an international Bollywood star's nationwide tour.

Actor-singer Diljit Dosanjh will be on the road with his CONFIDENTIAL tour at the Birmingham Arena, SSE Wembley Arena, and Leeds First Direct Arena on May 19, 26 and 28 with the Grannies as part of the show.

Diljit became aware of the performing pretend pensioners after he was told of them performing in Solihull shopping centre to his track Patiala Pegg. He eventually tracked them down as the Fizzogs comedy

troupe, via social media, and invited them to join his tour.

Fizzog Deb Nicholls explained: "One of the many bystanders at Solihull took a video and uploaded it to Facebook. Diljit saw the video and shared it and it was retweeted by a huge business tycoon in India. We were featured in more than 25 news articles all across India after that tweet"

A month later the Indian movie star asked them to appear in his live show. The trio, who have a regular show on Black Country Radio, are now fine-tuning their Asian dance routine.

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Major M5 viaduct concrete repairs hit halfway mark

MAJOR work to repair the Oldbury viaduct between Junction 1 and 2 of the M5 has reached the halfway milestone.

Work has been ongoing for a year and has seen traffic filtered onto one side of the carriageway and the speed limit cut.

Work on the southbound carriageway is nearing completion and in the coming weeks the project will switch

to the northbound side. More than 5,000 separate repairs have been carried out on the southbound carriageway, 3,500 more than anticipated.

The £100 million scheme is believed to be the largest concrete repair job ever carried out in Britain. Highways England project manager Zbigniew Twarowski said: "The scale of this project is vast."

MUSIC, performance and technology students from Halesowen College are joining forces to host a music festival tomorrow (Friday).

The Mayfly Festival will take place at Old Halesowenians Rugby Club, Wassell Grove.

Organisers are being supported by students in photography, graphics, public services, media, dance and musical theatre.

Gates open at 5.30pm and visitors will be treated to a range of music from the movies including The Blues Brothers and Guardians of the Galaxy.

Local businesses will be selling products, there will be refreshments and media students will also be showcasing their films at a cinema on site. Tickets are £5 from the Facebook page @mayflyfest or £8 on the door.

Students host music and media festival

Foodbanks give out 120,000 crisis packs

ALMOST 120,000 emergency food parcels have been handed out by foodbanks in the West Midlands in 12 months as the number of people needing help continues to rise.

Latest figures from the Trussell Trust showed its network of food banks which includes sites in the Black Country, Staffordshire and Wyre Forest, remain busy helping families that are struggling to make ends meet.

A total of 1,332,952 three-day emergency food supplies were handed out to people in crisis across the UK between April 1, 2017 and March 31, 2018 – a 13 per cent increase on the previous year and a record number for the charity.

While in the West Midlands, 119,946 food parcels were given out during the 12 month period – a rise of eight per cent on 2016/17.

The figures includes supplies handed out by volunteers at food banks in Quinton and Oldbury, Walsall North, Great Barr, Smethwick, Cannock, Rugeley and Kidderminster.

The Trussell Trust said debt accounted for an increasing percentage of people being referred to a food bank. The statistics show essential costs of housing and utility bills are also causing families to seek help. The other main referral reasons in 2017/18 were benefit delays and benefit changes.

Chloe selling bows to help beat cancer



Chloe Evans raises funds for charities in her father's memory

AN aspiring dancer is marking the fifth anniversary of her father's death by raising funds for a cancer charity.

Chloe Evans, from Sedgley, has raised funds for Bowel Cancer UK and Beating Bowel Cancer since losing her dad, Wayne, to the disease in 2013, aged 42.

The 20-year-old has raised almost £8,000 and now wants to reach her fundraising target of £10,000 with her annual 'Wear a Bow Day' on May 18.

Chloe's father was diagnosed with terminal bowel cancer when she was 13-years-old and he died 17 months afterwards. She is now determined to make more people aware of bowel cancer and raise much-needed funds for the cause.

She said: "Every year we hold a 'Wear a Bow Day' on the date of my dad's passing. Our dad was a family man and we were a very close family of four, so myself, my mum and sister do all we can to keep each other going and keep his memory alive." Go to justgiving.com/fundraising/chloes-bows

MP backs campaign on energy firm bills

AN MP has backed a campaign by Citizens Advice to tackle the 'excess' profits made by energy companies. Statistics obtained by Citizens Advice claim energy companies are making profits of £305 per household in the West Midlands.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin said: "It's terrible that families are paying an average of £305 straight on to the profits of energy companies. That's why I am backing this campaign to make sure hard working people in the Black Country aren't footing the bill for these energy companies."

"Lots of families in the Black Country are struggling to make ends meet. Wages here are below the national average and bills keep going up with energy bills rocketing."

The Labour MP was visiting the town's new Citizens Advice centre in Stone Street last Friday to meet chief executive Laura Thomas. The bureau in Dudley helped 17,000 people last year, helped prevent 600 losing their homes and claim £15 million in benefits they were entitled to.

Early-bird tickets for family festival fundraiser snapped up

THOUSANDS of people have got their hands on early-bird tickets to a family festival.

SummerFest will take over the grounds of Himley Hall on July 15, in aid of Stourbridge's Mary Stevens Hospice.

Discounted tickets were available until last week with thousands of festival-goers snapping them up over the

long weekend. Some will be travelling from as far as Lancashire for the popular event.

A full day of music will take place on the Signal 107 main stage with sets from X Factor stars Reggie N Bollie, Matt Terry and soul star Lemar.

Other attractions include fair-ground rides, classic car show, food festival, cocktail bar, beer tent, prince and princess meet and greet, and

family activities, from 10am to 5pm. Laura Millard, community engagement officer at the hospice, said: "We want this to be a fantastic community occasion that we can all look back on fondly for many years to come."

Tickets are available at £17.50 for over 14s, while younger children get in free. To book, call 01384 377778 or visit www.marystevenshospice.co.uk/summerfest-2018

Rare chance to visit Earl's 'secret' garden

VISITORS can walk in the footsteps of the rich and famous when private gardens near Dudley open for a rare viewing. People can take a tour around the Earl of Dudley's Memory Garden at Himley Hall, created as a tribute to previous earls and their loved ones.

The gardens, near to St Michael's and All Angels Church, next to the Dudley Council-owned mansion, are seldom open to the public. Tributes include those to Edwardian actress Gertie Millar, who was the second wife of the second earl. It's also the last resting place of the fourth earl and his wife, film star Maureen Swanson.

There is a small charge to enter the Memory Garden, open 11am until 4pm on June 16 and 1pm until 3.30pm on June 17. See www.himleyhallandpark.co.uk

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14 Woman taken on knife-point car 'journey of terror'

A KIDNAPPER who took a woman a shopper on a knife-point 'journey of terror,' in her own car has been jailed for four years.

David Vann struck as 53-year-old Lesley Jones prepared to drive away from the Oldbury Green Retail Park. The 57-year-



Lesley Jones - kidnapped

old serial criminal, who had just bought four knives, opened the passenger door and jumped into the Renault Clio brandishing a five-inch blade at 1.30pm on February 26.

"He was pointing the knife towards the woman and ordered her to drive him out of the area - she was petrified," said Mrs Sati Ruck, prosecuting, told Wolverhampton Crown Court.

The mother-of-five feared he would stab her if she did not do as she was told but deliberately started off in the direction of her home in Tipton.

"When she missed a right turn the defendant became more aggressive, put the knife close to her neck and declared 'Your car or your life'."

She was bundled out of the Clio close to Tipton police station as the defendant, who has never had a driving licence, clambered behind the wheel and sped off.

Chased

After she had phoned the police and family her son Jordan spotted the Clio near Dudley and unsuccessfully tried to block it at a set of lights with his vehicle, which was smashed into by Vann who also hit a bin lorry. Police spotted the Clio and chased it through several red lights and it was also driven on the wrong side of the road.

The pursuit ended near the M6 junction at West Bromwich. Vann, who had convictions involving 135 separate offences, was found in possession of knives and was over the drink-drive limit.

Mr Babir Adris, defending, said former mechanic Vann, who was living at a hostel in Edgbaston at the time, was a paranoid alcoholic who had bought the knives to protect himself against imagined threats.

Vann admitted kidnap, possession of four offensive weapons, aggravated vehicle taking, drink driving and dangerous driving. Judge Dean Kershaw told him: "You took that lady on a journey of terror." Vann was given an extended four year jail sentence with three more years of supervision.

Society aims to help end homelessness

A CAMPAIGN to end homelessness has been backed by the Black Country branch of a building society.

The Halesowen branch of the Yorkshire Building Society has partnered with End Youth Homelessness to mark its awareness week.

From Monday until May 20, the branch is spreading the word about the campaign to end homelessness among 16 to 25-year-olds.

Josh Watchorn, manager of the Halesowen branch of Yorkshire Building Society, said: "It is shocking so many young people in the West Midlands have had to receive homelessness support last year.

"We are proud to be backing End Youth Homelessness Week to help highlight the issue in our community and nationally.

"Through our partnership with End Youth Homelessness, we are providing real help for young people in need.

"Thanks to the support of people in Halesowen we have already raised a fantastic £283 that will go towards providing a home to a homeless young person."

Money donated to the society branch at the Cornbow Shopping Centre in Halesowen will fund the charities Rent Deposit Scheme - which helps young homeless move into their own home.

City council left in dark on possible return of Formula E street racing following claims



Formula E racing - will it be in Brum?

ANDY Street may have raced ahead of himself by suggesting the return of motor racing to the roads of the West Midlands is imminent, a council leader has claimed.

The region's Tory Mayor was said to be in 'advanced talks' with bosses over staging a 2019 leg of the all-electric Formula E series in Birmingham - making it the first time cars would race around the city since the 1990 Superprix.

But Birmingham City Council's Labour leader Ian Ward said the authority had been left in the dark

By Peter Madeley

over the plans. "I don't know what Andy has been doing but there have been no discussions between the organisers of Formula E and Birmingham City Council," he said.

"We don't know what the full costs of staging this event would be. We don't even know if the route - which is the roads that would be used that were prescribed by an act of Parliament - would be fit for purpose. Most importantly

of all, of course, there has been no full consultation with the people of Birmingham. We need to know what they think about this idea before we go making announcements that things will be happening in 12 months time." He added that he had been 'taken aback' by the Mayor's 'premature' announcement.

"It would appear that Andy has gone ahead and concluded some negotiations without going down the proper route," he said.

"It is very important that things are done properly. I'm a great be-

liever in bringing major events to the city. I've been involved in bringing many sporting events, not least the Commonwealth Games to Birmingham, so I get the benefit of them."

Mr Ward denied his intervention was grounded in political differences with the Mayor. "This is absolutely not a political row, I'm all for working very closely with the West Midlands Mayor, but let's do it in the right way." Mr Street is due to meet with council bosses tomorrow, Friday to discuss the race.

Firearms surrender launched to get guns off the streets

Hit comedy promises to be a work of 'Art'



Art for art's sake? Stars of stage and screen Denis Lawson, Stephen Tompkinson and Nigel Havers at the launch of ART at Birmingham's Ikon Gallery

THREE men, three friends and one painting is the subject of a smash-hit comedy coming to Birmingham.

Winner of several theatre awards, ART is heading to the Birmingham Hippodrome next week featuring three famous faces from the stage and television.

Acting icons Nigel Havers, Denis Lawson and Stephen Tompkinson are reviving the Oliver, Tony and Moliere award-winning play for its 20th anniversary.

The trio were at the city's Ikon Gallery on Tuesday to launch its week-long run at the Hippodrome.

Written by Yasmina Reza, the comedy is about the friendship between three old friends in Paris - Serge, Ivan and Marc - who find out they have different opinions on modern art. When Serge spends a huge amount of money on an all white modernist painting, his close friends Marc and Ivan are baffled.

Nigel, who plays art-loving Serge, said: "I

think it is one of the best comedy plays ever written - it really stands the test of time. Every night performing it is a total joy."

Denis, who plays Marc, said: "I saw the original production 20 years ago and when they asked me to do it, I read it and I loved it."

Stephen, who is reprising his role as Ivan, said: "It is like a mental workout. The play goes at such a pace, that you can't switch off."

ART is at Birmingham Hippodrome Monday to Saturday. See The Ticket from page 17.

Report by David Cosgrove

A FIREARMS surrender has kicked off in the West Midlands - with people urged to hand over their weapons to police.

The last surrender saw nearly 250 potentially lethal weapons and ammunition handed in comprising over 100 working firearms including rifles, shotguns, revolvers and handguns. In addition, silencers, starting pistols, air weapons and two deactivated machine guns including an SKS 7 and a 'Tommy gun' were taken into police stations across the region.

Already this year the force has taken 53 firearms off the streets amid 45 reported firearms discharges, compared to 62 in the same period last year.

Det Insp Rod Rose, from the Force's CID Prevent team, said: "Previous gun surrenders have proved very successful in removing firearms from our streets.

"Although enforcement activity is important, it is vital that police, partners and the community work together to stop young people being involved in violent crime and gang activity before it gets to that stage. There is significant community support for this activity, and we're working with other agencies as well to try and make our towns and cities safe for local people.

Prison

"I would urge anyone who is holding a gun, maybe through fear or misguided loyalty to someone else, to hand it in now, otherwise the alternative could be up to five years in prison."

Weapons can be surrendered at any West Midlands Police station or by calling the force on 101 and arranging for officers to make home visits.

It's also hoped the surrender will stop unused shotguns or antique firearms - often war relics gathering dust in loft spaces - from potentially falling into the hands of criminals.

Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson said: "I welcome the campaign by West Midlands Police to tackle the problem of violent crime. The last surrender saw nearly 250 weapons handed in to police, many of which could have fallen into the wrong hands. "Every weapon taken off the streets is potentially a life saved. The consequences of violent crime have a devastating impact."

Guns can be surrendered anonymously but the history of live weapons handed in will be checked for any evidence of criminal use. The firearms will either be destroyed at the West Midlands Police armoury or retained for training exercises.

The surrender runs until May 27.

Public asked to act to save building heritage by charity

A CHARITY is calling for people across the West Midlands to nominate at-risk buildings in need of support.

The Victorian Society compiles an annual list of England and Wales' top 10 endangered Victorian and Edwardian structures. And the society is now encouraging people to nominate buildings for the 2018 edition, joining a line of recent Black Country entries.

Chance Glassworks in Smethwick appeared

in last year's top 10 and steps are being made towards its salvation.

The heritage trust, which is planning the future of the Glassworks site, is working on an outline planning application, whilst the council is continuing to explore legal means to remove the skip hire business which is operating from the site.

Meanwhile conversion works at St Luke's Church in Wolverhampton, which featured on

the 2015 list, are almost finished to transform it into an antiques and vintage emporium.

The Victorian Society's annual campaign encourages people to nominate Victorian buildings in their area that they feel are under threat, whether that be from neglect, insensitive redevelopment or even demolition.

A shortlist of the 10 most endangered Victorian buildings in the country is then chosen by the charity's architecture and conservation

experts, and the buildings in that list are given publicity which could help save them.

People are asked to send their nominations in by email to media@victoriansociety.org.uk.

Alternatively, entries can be posted to The Victorian Society, 1 Priory Gardens, London W4 1TT.

Nominated buildings must be in England or Wales, and built some time between 1837 and 1914.

Tributes pour in for Baggies FA Cup hero

TRIBUTES have been paid to Albion FA Cup hero Graham Lovett, who has died at the age of 70 following a short illness.

Mr Lovett played alongside Jeff Astle in the Baggies side that beat Everton in the 1968 Cup final at Wembley.

After his retirement he carved out a second career at the Express & Star, working for the newspaper's advertising department for more than 14 years, finishing his second career at sales manager as The Chronicle in 1998. Colleagues remember him as a fun-loving character. E&S regional sales manager Pete Hazel, said: "Graham is not

only a legend with Albion fans, he is a legend with his former colleagues."

Lovett made 157 appearances for Albion, scoring nine goals, but saw his career hampered through injuries sustained in two serious car crashes.

Joining the Baggies straight from school, wing-half made his debut aged 17 in 1964. He properly established himself in the Baggies team the following season, scoring four goals in 47 games. His good form continued into the following campaign, but his season ended just before Christmas when a serious car accident left him in hospital with a broken neck and fears that he would never play again.

Lovett watched the 1967 FA Cup final from his hospital bed, but a year later was at Wembley, given the key role of marshalling Everton's Ray Wilson, as Albion recorded a 1-0 win to lift the cup through Astle's famous strike.



Graham Lovett, second from right, celebrating winning the 1968 FA Cup final

Hospital app to boost efficiency

A HOSPITAL will allow NHS workers to fill empty shifts through a new app as part of a trial aiming to reduce reliance and spend on agency staff.

Thousands of doctors, midwives and nurses will be able to sign up to work extra hours at Russells Hall Hospital using the technology, and some could be paid within just 24 hours.

The scheme, funded by the Department for Health and Social Care, hopes to improve flexible working for NHS staff and help hospitals respond

better to increased demand. Hospital trusts in the Black Country have spent millions of pounds on drafting in temporary workers in recent years to help them cope with increased demand and staff sickness.

The Dudley Group NHS Trust is among several trusts to have been selected for the trial. Chief executive Diane Wake said: "We are thrilled to be chosen as one of the first pilot trusts working to improve the way we engage with temporary staff."

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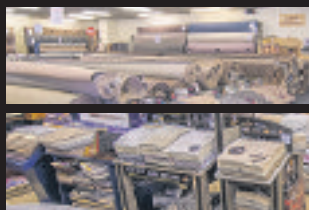
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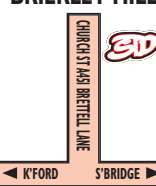
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Jason Donovan's tour includes a Brierley Hill date

Curtain-up on Jason's life of many colours

He's been a heart-throb in Neighbours, singer and reality star, he's won a drugs battle and now he's out on tour – especially for you

When Jason Donovan takes to the stage in the coming months audiences are in for a surprise, writes Andy Richardson.

For the boy who made it big on Neighbours, dated Kylie, went to number one, thrilled as Joseph and developed a very public cocaine habit before returning on I'm A Celebrity and Strictly Come Dancing is doing something he's never done before – making his audiences laugh as though he were a stand-up. The man who shot to fame as Scott Robinson is playing Shropshire and the wider West Midlands as part of his Amazing Mid-Life Crisis tour. And the show is full of funny stories that have had audiences laughing in the aisles across the UK.

The pop star who scored the biggest selling album of 1989 with Ten Good Reasons is having fun on a tour that's unlike anything he's ever done before. "I've toured as a pop star, I've toured as an actor, I've toured in musical theatre – but I've never been out there as myself before. "And it's been brilliant fun. Over the past 30 years, I've accumulated a mass of funny stories – about Kylie, Elton John, George Michael – you name them, I've probably met them. So the current tour is a chance to tell a load of stories, sing a couple of songs and really get intimate with the fans. It's brilliant. I've having great fun."

Donovan's show is called My Amazing Midlife Crisis. The name came about because he suffered problems with his voice after being on the road in musicals for 10 straight years. It also coincides with his 50th birthday. His voice problems are now under control – though they gave him a fright and he underwent botox treatment to aid his recovery.

Donovan spills the beans on a remarkable life when he takes to the stage. "Everybody wants to know about certain things," he says. "Neighbours is always popular, so I talk about that. You know, we were watched by more than 20 million people here in the UK and it changed our lives. "But what a lot of people don't realise is that

Kylie and I knew each other many years before Neighbours, when we featured in another TV show as brother and sister. Neighbours was a remarkable period of our lives and it was hugely successful.

"I remember U2 once playing a show in Australia and they called out Scott and Charlene from the stage – it was everywhere."

Stock, Aitken and Waterman signed him up and his Ten Good Reasons album became the biggest hit of the year, while Jason and Kylie fought it out with Cliff over the Christmas Number One slot with Especially For You. "Kylie and I were an item for about four years. And the things that were happening on Neighbours and in the charts were broadly similar to what was happening in real life.

"We were able to put our own personalities into the characters and it was amazing few years."

Wowed

From there, he went to Andrew Lloyd-Webber's Joseph, which wowed Princess Diana, Elton John and many, many more. But while he was the talk of the town and shot to number one, his private life was spinning out of control. He'd always enjoyed the odd joint back in Australia and as the rave generation hit and London was flooded with ecstasy and acid, he very quickly graduated to cocaine.

He used the drug to help him escape before a dramatic incident at where he passed out at Kate Moss's birthday party.

He doesn't regret taking drugs. "I took them because they were fun. Though I've been clean for 18 years and I now know what I don't want to do with my life."

Donovan has been with his long term partner for 20 years and they have been married for 10, after getting hitched in Bali. They have three children.

"It's great. My wife is my best friend and we're very happy. It's not perfect, no relationship ever

is, but we're a great team and that was the thing that turned my life around."

His public rehabilitation came through two reality shows: I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out Of Here and Strictly Come Dancing.

Since then, he's been back on the road in a variety of musicals – among his fans' favourites are Priscilla, Rocky Horror, Million Dollar Quartet and The King's Speech. And there have also been 1980s festivals and plenty of pop gigs.

"When we decided to do the tour, we weren't quite sure what it would all be about. But then I began having a crisis because of my voice and the show ended up writing itself.

"We've been on the road since the start of the year and we're playing quite a few shows locally – we've played Telford Oakengates and Stafford Gatehouse and have Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn to come.

"I have great fans and My Amazing Midlife Crisis has given me the chance to do a show that gives them the chance to meet the real me."



Jason with Kylie in the heady days of Neighbours

Ex-Neighbour now the funny man next door



Jason's autobiographical show combined chat with some classic songs

MANY of us grew up with him when he starred in Neighbours.

Jason Donovan was the good-looking, sun-tanned beach bum who dated Kylie on and off-screen before launching a pop career and scoring the best-selling album of 1989, with Ten Good Reasons.

He went on to dazzle London's West End in Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat and Priscilla Queen of the Desert.

With his 50th birthday on the horizon – remarkably, it's three days the other side of Kylie's birthday – he's taken to the road in his Amazing Mid Life Crisis Tour, including this date at Telford's Oakengates Theatre. The autobiographical show combined a confessional spoken word section interspersed with questions from the audience – the best one was "Stage door or Wether-



Jason performing for the crowd

poons? 10pm" – with a few acoustic songs. It worked – frequently with hilarious effects. Donovan's show was punctuated by the merry sound of laughter as he had the audience in the palm of his hand.

Donovan took to the stage for an illustrated monologue in which the hilarious stories came thick and fast.

A tale about Gary Barlow, Kylie Minogue and Bouncer the overfed dog from Neighbours had the audience in hysterics and brought the first round of applause of the evening.

Similar tales – including ones about George Michael, Sir Elton John and others – were belly-laugh-funny and ever-so-slightly anarchic.

Review by Andy Richardson

A brilliant anecdote about upstaging U2 nearly brought the house down as Donovan recalled how he'd been hashtagged #Legend by Stella McCartney and a group of supermodels after an aftershow party for the Irish rockers.

Donovan has been many things during his colourful career – heart-throb, cocaine abuser, dad, mega star, actor, musical theatre performer and more.

But on his Mid Life Crisis tour he's also a comic.

His timing, his engagement with the audience and his ability to tell a great story cast him as an unexpected stand-up.

Stories about the perils of fame, a fan who waited at the stage door for him in Glasgow and his love for his family and a normal life were delivered with great panache.

"What do your kids think of their famous dad?" somebody asked.

"I'm embarrassing," he deadpanned. "Or, at least I was until I started winning on Strictly. Then it all changed."

Ribbing

During the show, Donovan asked how many fans had attended his signature 1990 tour, which included four nights at Wembley Arena?

"Great," he laughed, when few people responded. "Four of you."

He asked how many had enjoyed his 2016 Ten Good Reasons tour?

"Ok, getting better. About 15."

The 500-plus crowd laughed.

"It's just nice to know that the older I get the more fans I seem to attract."

The show featured a number of stage costumes and Donovan shared tales of his time on I'm A Celebrity and Strictly Come Dancing during a fast-paced and funny second half.

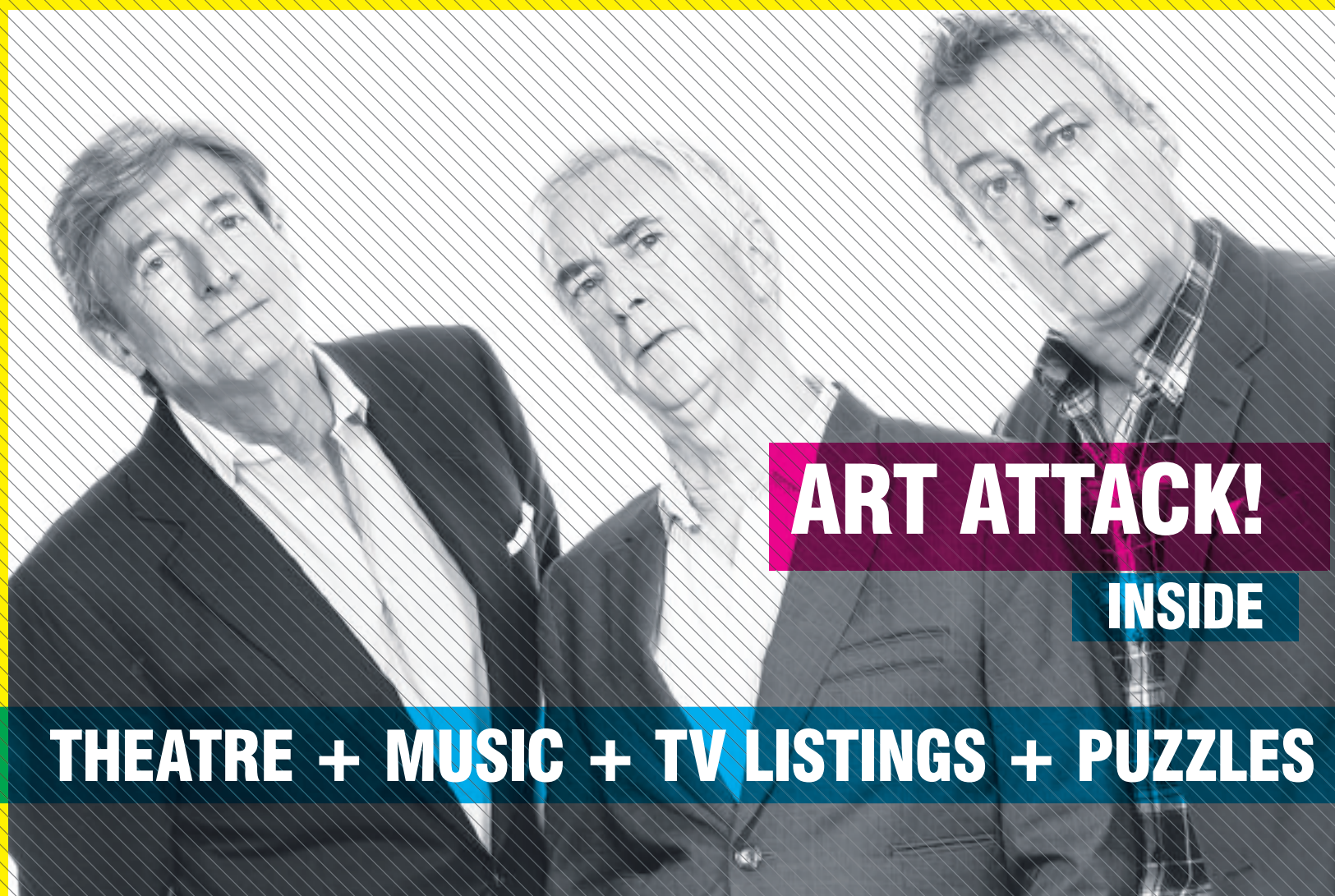
He seemed to genuinely enjoy his time with the Telford crowd and frequently thanked them for his support.

The audience responded with humorous ribbing and plenty of banter – at one point, a woman even stopped the show to demonstrate her impression of a duck. The audience howled. Perhaps you just had to be there.

The second half started and ended with songs – Donovan beautifully re-interpreting two classic hits in acoustic format.

After a breathless two hours it was all over. The only question left unanswered was this – did he wait at the stage door or head off to Wetherspoons?

Jason Donovan will bring his Amazing Midlife Crisis to Brierley Hill Civic Hall on September 7. See www.bhillcivic.co.uk



ART ATTACK!

INSIDE

THEATRE + MUSIC + TV LISTINGS + PUZZLES



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There's an Art to making a top play

They've known each other for around 20 years. So for Stephen Tompkinson, Nigel Havers and Denis Lawson, lining up in a major production of Yasmina Reza's *Olivier*, Tony and Moliere award-winning comedy *Art*, translated by Christopher Hampton, is an absolute joy to behold.

The show reaches Birmingham Hippodrome from Monday to May 26 as part of a major tour. And audiences are in for a treat.

Stephen says: "We've had a very positive reaction so far. We've known each other for 20 years and we're playing characters whose friendship is supposed to have lasted for 25 years. It's a very enjoyable part to play."

Stephen's television credits include five series of *DCI Banks*, four series of *Trollied*, seven series of *Wild at Heart*, six series of *Drop the Dead Donkey* (British Comedy Award Winner for Best TV Comedy Actor) and three series of *Ballykissangel* while his films include *Phil in Brassed Off*. His theatre work includes *Spamalot*, *Rattle of a Simple Man* and *Arsenic and Old Lace* in the West End, *Cloaca* (Old Vic) and *Tartuffe* (National Tour).

Art is a particular favourite of Tompkinson, however. He first read the script 18 years ago and saw the original production with Ken Stott, Tom Courtenay and Albert Finney.

"I came into the play about two years after that and funnily enough Nigel was in the adjoining rehearsal space doing a version that was about to go out on tour.

FORTUNE

"*Art* deals with three Parisian friends. One buys a white canvass, or so it seems, but if you look at it more closely you can see there's more layers to it. He's paid a small fortune for it.

"His other friend, Mark, played by Dennis, hates the painting and thinks he's lost his marbles. My character is in the middle trying to placate them."

Stephen has loved the play since day one. "I was dazzled when I saw the first night of the play. There was a magic chemistry between the three actors because the writing was so good.

"Nigel's done it a few times before – he'll have played it more than 800 times by the end of the run. And Dennis was the only one who was new to it. He came in on the first day of rehearsal and knew every single line because he assumed we would have known it inside out having played it before. As it turned out, he was the only one who was word perfect and Nigel and I were surprising how quickly we'd forgotten. We only had 2-and-a-half weeks to rehearse it."

Stephen says the show changes from town to town as different audiences react to it.

"In many ways, the audiences teach you the play. They teach you where the laughs are and where to take your time a bit more. It's different every night. It keeps you on your toes. It's an hour and 20 straight through with no interval. Once the train leaves the station it goes off at a rate of knots. The three of us sit down and have a debrief after a show because it's always changing and developing, so there are slightly new things coming to it and we run those by each other."

Though Stephen has spent much time in TV and film, he enjoys the thrill of live performance. Being on the road is a thrill.

"I love being on the road. It's a great way to see the country and most of my days are free.

"The variety is what keeps me going. I do enjoy it. I started in radio and moved into TV. If you haven't done theatre for a long time you miss it and it's a different set of acting muscles. You're reliant on the comedy in this piece."

His greatest film role was *Brassed Off*, in which he starred opposite his great friend, the Oscar-nominated

Chemistry – Stephen, Nigel and Denis in the award-winning *Art*



Shropshire actor Pete Postlethwaite. He has only the fondest of memories. "I did my first TV with him as well, which was tales of *Sherwood Forest*. Then I think when the opportunity came up to do my first feature film, *Brassed Off*, Pete put a word in and we ended up as father and son. There was a tremendous honesty about his performances. When it was just he and I sharing a scene, you could stare into Pete's face and he could make everything else disappear."

The new version of *Art* is being produced by David Pugh and Dafydd Rogers and Pugh says it's an honour to get to grips with the world-leading show.

He says: "It is 20 years since Dafydd [Rogers] and I first produced the comedy masterpiece *ART* in the West End, and the original post-London tour played for 78 weeks. This time, we want to break our own record; in fact, we want to play as many theatres as Sir Ken Dodd has played in his wonderful career, and with this marvellous cast, we think we have every chance."

Nigel Havers's films include *Chariots of Fire*, *A Passage to India*, *Empire of the Sun* and *The Whistle Blower*. He has starred in many television productions, including *The Charmer*, *Dangerfield*, *Manchild*, and, more recently, the hit US series *Brothers and Sisters*, *Lewis Archer* in *Coronation Street*, *Benidorm* and *Lord Hepworth* in *Downton Abbey*.

Denis Lawson is known for his roles as John Jarndyce in the BBC's adaptation of *Bleak House*, for which he

There was a magic chemistry between the three actors . . . the writing's good

was nominated for an EMMY award, and as DI Steve McAndrew in BBC One's hit series *New Tricks*. In film, his notable credits include the roles of Gordon Urquhart in the film *Local Hero* and *Wedge Antilles* in the original *Star Wars* trilogy. On stage, he won an Olivier Award for Best Actor in a Musical for his performance as Jim Lancaster in *Mr Cinders* at the Fortune Theatre, and he was nominated for an Olivier for his performance as George in *La Cages Aux Folles* at the Playhouse Theatre.

Andy Richardson

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Legally Blonde The Musical



OMG, you guys, this show has got blonde ambition

A star cast features in a smash hit West End musical that will have audiences saying 'oh my God you guys' at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre next week.

Legally Blonde The Musical is based on a novel by Amanda Brown that was adapted into a movie starring Reese Witherspoon in 2001.

It tells the tale of a beautiful and popular sorority sister Elle Woods who loves to be pampered and is passionate about pink.

But when she is dumped by her boyfriend Warner Huntington III for a more serious girlfriend she puts down the credit cards and picks up the books. Packing up her trusty pooch, Bruiser, she bags herself a place at the prestigious Harvard Law School to try to win him

back. With the support of her new friends she learns that you can be both smart and fashionable.

Star of the show as Elle is Lucie Jones, who represented the UK at last year's Eurovision Song Contest with Never Give Up On You and recently starred as Maureen in the 20th anniversary tour of Rent. She has played Elle Woods before in the Leicester Curve production and was a finalist in the 2009 series of The X Factor.

Alongside her playing Paulette Bonafonte, is Rita Simons, best known as EastEnders' Roxy Mitchell. Professor Callahan is played by Bill Ward who is a familiar face from both Emmerdale and Coronation Street. Legally Blonde The Musical runs at the Alex from Monday to Saturday.

Singer Scott free to make new start



THE horizon has changed dramatically since Wolverhampton's Ivor Novello-Award Winning singer-songwriter Scott Matthews broke through with the release of his first album, *Passing Stranger*, in 2006.

He's toured the world, been lauded by critics and become a pal of Robert Plant and Foo Fighters' Dave Grohl. His breakout single, *Elusive*, earned him a battalion of fans, won awards and saw him signed to one of the UK's biggest record labels.

These days he does things differently. He makes his music in the shed at the bottom of his garden and his record company is no longer Island - it's his own appropriately-named Shedio Records. He's taken back control.

Matthews will headline Birmingham's St Paul's Church in the Jewellery Quarter on Sunday, following the release of his new album, *The Great Untold*. The record follows his recent *Home I and Home II* sequence and marks the dawn of a new era for the performer. On his sixth record, Matthews has created songs that are audacious in their simplicity.

The richness in Matthews' new work comes from subtle playing and mellifluous melodies. He has improved again.

In many ways, *The Great Untold* is the start of a new era for Matthews, the star of bluesy acoustica has refined his craft.

He said: "It can be a very isolating existence to sit in pitch black at the bottom of the garden recording songs when everyone has gone to bed. But to know you have the fans with you every step, always encouraging and asking what's going on, makes a huge difference."

Gaz's new album is a bit of Alright

Former Supergrass frontman Gaz Coombes is back with his third solo album, *World's Strongest Man*, which is positive proof that Noel Gallagher isn't the only Britpop veteran still making great music.

The follow-up to 2015's *Matador* sees Coombes genre hop between sublime pop, driving motorik rock and funky soul with songs that run the gamut from the raucous raw to blissed-out psychedelia. The Oxford-born singer-songwriter has a gig at Birmingham's O2 Institute 2 in Digbeth on Monday.



Let musical lift you up where you belong

Theatre highlights - apart from *Art* (see left) and *Legally Blonde The Musical* (above) - include *An Officer and a Gentleman The Musical* at Birmingham Hippodrome until Saturday. Based on the romantic Richard Gere movie, the feel-good 1980s pop hits promise to let love lift you up where you belong. A quartet of classical musicians and quartet of actors - including Cathy Tyson (*Band of Gold/Mona Lisa*) and Miltos Yerolemos (*Game of Thrones/Murder on the Orient Express*) - unite in *The String Quartet's Guide To Sex And Anxiety*, a challenging new production from radical Spanish director Calixto Bieito at Birmingham Rep until Saturday. Grand Arena Youth Theatre presents *Delivered Dozen: A Miners' Tale*, the true story of a Victorian Black Country mining disaster at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre on Tuesday.



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CHOICE



Prince Harry and Meghan Markle

The Royal Wedding: Prince Harry and Meghan Markle (BBC1, 9am)
Kirsty Young, Huw Edwards and Dermot O'Leary present live coverage of the ceremony, which takes place at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. Following the service, the newlyweds will begin their celebrations with a carriage procession around the streets of Windsor, accompanied by soldiers from the Mounted Regiment of the Household Cavalry, where thousands will be cheering them on. Tina Daheley, Alex Jones, Ore Oduba and Anita Rani will be on hand to capture all the stories and reactions on a day of national celebration.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **9.00** The Royal Wedding: Prince Harry and Meghan Markle. **2.00** Football Focus. **3.00** Mourinho & Manchester, United. **3.20** FA Cup. The Road To Wembley. (R) **3.50** BBC News. **4.00** Regional Programme. **4.10** Match of the Day Live: The FA Cup. All the build-up to today's final. **5.00** Match of the Day Live: The FA Cup. Chelsea v Manchester United (Kick-off 5.15pm).
7.40 **Pointless Celebrities.** Rich Hall, Shappi Khorsandi, Sian Lloyd, Fred MacAulay, Mark King, Stuart Maconie, Chemistry Alcott and Amy Williams all take part in the unorthodox general knowledge quiz show. (R)
8.30 **Casualty.** Iain and Sam receive a sharp greeting from unconventional new operations manager Jan Jennings. Ethan and Connie clash over the low staff levels resulting from Bea's resignation.
9.20 **All Round to Mrs Brown's.** New series. Mrs Brown's Boys creator, writer and star Brendan O'Carroll dons Agnes's famous cardigan and curlers once again, throwing open the doors of the larger-than-life Irish matriarch's home to host the Saturday night chat show, filmed in front of a studio audience. In this first episode, Mrs Brown welcomes EastEnders hard-man Danny Dyer, boxer and former I'm a Celebrity contestant Amir Khan, and TV presenter Kate Humble. Music is provided by Tito Jackson, the third-eldest of the legendary Jackson family.
10.20 **BBC News:** Weather; National Lottery Update.
10.50 **Match of the Day: The FA Cup.** Chelsea v Manchester United. Highlights of the final, which took place at Wembley Stadium, as Antonio Conte and Jose Mourinho's men battled it out for the famous trophy.
11.25 **The Button.** Game show set simultaneously in the houses of five UK families, as they compete to win challenges determined by The Button in the comfort of their living rooms. (R)
11.55 **Film: The Wedding Video.** (2012) A would-be film-maker decides to document his brother's wedding on video, only to be met by a series of disasters. Comedy, with Rufus Hound and Lucy Punch.
1.25 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.30** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 David Attenborough's Natural Curiosities. (R) **6.40** Naomi's Nightmares of Nature. (R) **7.10** The Pets Factor. **7.30** The Dengineers. **8.00** Absolute Genius Super Tech with Dick & Dom. **8.30** Beyond Bionic. **9.00** Robot Wars. (R) **10.00** Astronauts: Do You Have What It Takes? (R) **11.00** SAS: Rogue Warriors. (R) **12.00** Film: Tron: Legacy. (2010) Sci-fi adventure sequel, starring Jeff Bridges.
2.00 The World According to Kids. (R) **3.00** Love in the Countryside. (R) **4.00** Amazing Hotels: Life Beyond the Lobby. (R) **5.00** The Forest. **5.30** Pangolins - The World's Most Wanted Animal. (R)
6.30 **Dad's Army.** Mainwaring's platoon tries to raise money for the local Spitfire fund by having a bash at morris dancing. Classic comedy first broadcast in 1974, starring Arthur Lowe. (R)
7.00 **The Royal Wedding: Highlights of the Day.** Kirsty Young, Huw Edwards and Dermot O'Leary reflect on the key moments from today's event. They look back on highlights of the ceremony, the arrival of guests including the Queen and senior members of the Royal Family, and the first glimpse of the bride in her dress. The presenters are joined in the studio by some of those lucky enough to have attended the celebrations, and by those who played a significant part in the day.
8.30 **Motty Mastermind.** The retiring football commentator hosts a special edition of the general knowledge quiz, with Alex Scott, Anthony Crolla, Jonathan Pearce, and Mark Foster answering questions.
9.00 **Motty - The Man Behind the Sheepskin.** An insight into the career of football commentator John Motson, who is retiring this season after 50 years at the BBC.
10.05 **Countdown to the Full Motty.** Gary Lineker presents a selection of John Motson's greatest football commentaries, featuring contributions from players involved in some of those memorable moments.
10.35 **Film: The Damned United.** (2009) Fact-based drama chronicling Brian Clough's fraught and controversial 44-day tenure as manager of Leeds United in 1974. Starring Michael Sheen, Timothy Spall and Jim Broadbent.
12.05 **Film: False Trail.** (2011) **2.10** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Super 4. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** The Oddbods Show. (R) **7.05** Star Wars Freemaker Adventures. (R) **7.30** Teen Titans Go! (R) **7.45** Adventure Time. (R) **8.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. **8.25** Zoe Ball on Saturday. **9.25** Harry and Meghan - The Royal Wedding. **3.00** Tenable. (R) **4.00** Tipping Point: Lucky Stars. (R) **5.00** The Chase. (R)
6.00 **ITV News:** Weather.
6.15 **Regional Programme:** Weather.
6.30 **Ninja Warrior UK.** Competitors from across the nation test their strength, speed and courage in part two of the obstacle-course challenge's semi-final, hosted by Ben Shephard, Rochelle Humes and Chris Kamara.
7.30 **Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule.** Chef Rosemary Shrager, Radio 2 DJ Liza Tarbuck, Doctor Who's fifth Doctor Peter Davison and X Factor star/vant Louis Walsh join the comedian for the madcap panel show.
8.00 **Britain's Got Talent.** Ant and Dec host the sixth audition round of the nationwide talent search, which sees a wide variety of acts, from comedians to contortionists, singers to spoon players, compete to impress Judges Simon Cowell, Alesha Dixon, Amanda Holden and David Walliams. Whomever the quartet choose to send through to the live stages will then be in with a chance of winning a huge cash prize and a coveted slot at the Royal Variety Performance later this year, following in the footsteps of 2017 winner Tokio Myers.
9.20 **The Keith & Paddy Picture Show.** Keith Lemon teams up with Paddy McGuinness to remake Steven Spielberg's 1993 classic Jurassic Park, with help from Sian Gibson, Sally Phillips and George Potts. Last in the series.
9.50 **ITV News:** Weather.
10.20 **Film: Jaws 3.** (1983) A ferocious mother shark comes looking for her dead baby, causing havoc in a Florida marine centre. Thriller sequel, starring Dennis Quaid, Simon MacCorkindale and Louis Gossett Jr.
12.15 Change Your Tune. (R) **1.20** Jackpot247. **3.00** Mr Selfridge. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.15 Motor Sport: Volkswagen Racing Cup. **6.40** Mobil 1: The Grid. **7.10** The King of Queens. (R) **7.35** The King of Queens. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Frasier. (R) **10.00** Frasier. (R) **10.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.25** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.55** The Simpsons. (R) **12.25** The Simpsons. (R) **12.55** The Simpsons. (R) **1.30** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.30** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **3.30** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **4.30** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.35** The Secret Life of the Zoo. (R)
6.30 **Channel 4 News.**
7.00 **Grand Designs.** Kevin McCloud meets neurologists Penny Talelli and Mark Edwards, who plan to combine their love of old and contemporary architecture as they transform a derelict Victorian gatehouse in North London. However, the pair soon find themselves struggling to balance their busy working lives alongside project managing the build. (R)
8.00 **Titanic: The New Evidence.** Investigative journalist and Titanic expert Senan Molony examines recently recovered photographs of the doomed ship, which provide fresh insight into the reasons for its sinking. The images reveal a strange mark on the hull, which may prove previously overlooked stories of a fire raging in the boiler room. (R)
9.00 **Film: The Martian.** (2015) Premiere. A manned mission to Mars is abruptly abandoned, with one crew member left for dead. However, the astronaut has survived and faces a series of challenges - to contact Earth and arrange his rescue and to survive for the years it will take for a spacecraft to reach him on resources intended to last a month. Ridley Scott's sci-fi drama based on the novel by Andy Weir, starring Matt Damon, Jessica Chastain and Chiwetel Ejiofor.
11.50 **Film: Sinister 2.** (2015) Premiere. A mother tries to protect her two sons from an evil spirit, while the ghost of its victims urge the boys to kill. Horror sequel, with Shannyn Sossamon.
1.30 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **2.20** Hollyoaks. (R) **4.30** Steph and Dom's One Star to Five Star. (R) **5.25** Fifteen to One. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.10** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.45** The Gadget Show. (R) **11.45** Britain's Greatest Bridges. **12.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **3.00** Harry and Meghan: A Royal Romance. **4.00** Access. **4.05** Harry and Meghan: A Royal Romance. **4.40** 5 News Weekend. **4.45** FIA Formula E Live. The Berlin ePrix.
6.30 **Britannia: Secrets of the Royal Yacht.** Part one of two. Rob Bell examines iconic ships that have played significant roles in Britain's maritime and cultural history, beginning with the Royal Yacht Britannia. (R)
7.20 **The Queen Mary: Cruising with the Royals.** Part two of two. Rob Bell examines RMS Queen Mary, the most famous ocean liner ever built and the first merchant naval ship ever to have been launched by a reigning sovereign. Built in the throes of the Great Depression, the Queen Mary lifted a nation out of an economic slump and re-established Britain as the greatest shipbuilding nation on Earth. (R)
8.20 **Elizabeth I: Battle for the Throne.** Drama-documentary about Elizabeth I, featuring reconstructions of key moments in her reign starring Lily Cole. The first episode follows her rise to the throne. (R)
9.20 **Queen Victoria and Her Tragic Family.** New series. Documentary following the story of the monarch after the death of her husband Albert, examining how her children rebelled against their mother one by one.
10.20 **Harry and Meghan: A Royal Romance.** Drama telling the love story of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, from the moment they met to their engagement and beyond. (R)
11.20 **Access.** Showbiz news and gossip.
11.25 **Harry and Meghan: A Royal Romance.** Drama telling the love story of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, from the moment they met to their engagement and beyond. (R)
12.00 SuperCasino. **3.10** GPs: Behind Closed Doors. (R) **4.00** The Snake Skin Woman: Extraordinary People. (R) **4.45** House Doctor. (R) **5.10** Great Artists. (R) **5.35** Wildlife SOS. The work of an animal sanctuary. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Nature's Epic Journeys **8.00** Tales from the Royal Bedchamber **9.00** Inspector Montalbano **10.50** Sicily: Wonder of the Mediterranean **11.50** Britain's Treasure Islands **12.50** Caravans: A British Love Affair **1.50** Nature's Epic Journeys **2.50** Tales from the Royal Bedchamber **3.50** Close
ITV2
11.25 Britain's Got More Talent **12.25** Ninja Warrior UK **1.30** You've Been Framed! Gold **2.35** Film: Peter Pan (2003) **3.40** FYI Daily **3.45** Film: Peter Pan (2003) **4.45** Film: Ella Enchanted (2004) **5.45** FYI Daily **5.50** Film: Ella Enchanted (2004) **6.45** Film: Pacific Rim (2013) **7.45** FYI Daily **7.50** Film: Pacific Rim (2013) **9.20** Britain's Got More Talent **10.20** Celebrity Juice **11.10** Family Guy **12.30** American Dad! **1.30** Plobs **2.00** CelebAbility **2.40** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.50** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen
ITV3
11.00 A Touch of Frost **3.25** Columbo **5.30** Royal Stories **6.00** Agatha Christie's Poirot **8.00** Harry and Meghan - The Royal Wedding **9.00** Film: The Blues Brothers (1980) **10.00** FYI Daily **10.05** Film: The Blues Brothers (1980) **11.40** Film: Unknown (2011) **12.40** FYI Daily **12.45** Film: Unknown (2011) **1.55** The Avengers **3.00** Teleshopping
ITV4
1.20 Snooker v Darts **1.30** ITV Racing: Live from Newbury. Ed Chamberlin and Francesca Cumani present coverage from Newbury and Newmarket. **4.00** Film: 633 Squadron (1964) **5.00** FYI Daily **5.05** Film: 633 Squadron (1964) **6.05** Mr Bean **7.10** Film: Police Academy 4: Citizens on Patrol (1987) **8.10** FYI Daily **8.15** Film: Police Academy 4: Citizens on Patrol (1987) **9.00** Film: The Blues Brothers (1980) **10.00** FYI Daily **10.05** Film: The Blues Brothers (1980) **11.40** Film: Unknown (2011) **12.40** FYI Daily **12.45** Film: Unknown (2011) **1.55** The Avengers **3.00** Teleshopping
E4
1.00 Brooklyn Nine-Nine **1.30** Young Sheldon **2.00** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** Film: Battleship (2012) **10.35** Gogglebox **12.40** The Inbetweeners **1.55** Tattoo Fixers **2.50** Rude Tube **4.10** Rude(ish) Tube **4.35** How I Met Your Mother
Film4
11.00 Silent Running (1972) **1.00** Spy Kids 4: All the Time in the World (2011) **2.45** Carry On Spying (1964) **4.30** The Seeker: The Dark Is Rising (2007) **6.30** The Fault in Our Stars (2014) **9.00** Ted 2 (2015) **11.15** Gangster No 1 (2000) **1.20** Don't Be Afraid of the Dark (2010) **3.30** Close

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CHOICE



Ben Whishaw stars

A Very English Scandal (BBC1, 9pm)

The last time most viewers saw – or at least heard – Ben Whishaw and Hugh Grant together, it was in 2017's most charming film, Paddington 2. Whishaw provided the voice of the marmalade-loving bear and Grant was the scene-stealing villain, actor Phoenix Buchanan. But now they've reunited for a rather different project as they take the lead roles in the three-part drama A Very English Scandal. It's based on the true story of politician Jeremy Thorpe (Grant), who was accused of conspiracy to murder his former lover Norman Scott (Whishaw) – and there isn't a talking bear in sight. For writer Russell T Davies, who adapted the drama from the book by John Preston, it's dream casting.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **8.25** Match of the Day: The FA Cup. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Feel the Spirit – A Jazz Celebration Service for Pentecost. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.10** Points of View. **2.25** Songs of Praise. **3.00** Film: Cinderella. (2015) Romantic fantasy, starring Lily James. **4.35** Britain's Best Home Cook. (R) **5.35** BBC News. **5.50** Regional Programme.

6.00 **RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2018.** New series. Sophie Raworth and Joe Swift present a preview of the Royal Horticultural Society's event for 2018 and a guide to some of the gardens on display. Nick Knowles presents a special showcase of gardens created to raise awareness on current issues, while Floella Benjamin introduces a look at an exhibit celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Windrush generation and charting their influence on British culture. Adam Frost and Carol Klein take a look at some of the other entries, revisiting some familiar faces from past shows.

7.00 **Countryfile.** A round-up of rural reports focused on spring, including Matt Baker visiting a garden designed to celebrate the show's 30th anniversary for this year's Hampton Court Flower Show.

8.00 **Antiques Roadshow.** Fiona Bruce presents a second visit to the Black Country Living Museum, where items brought in include a surrealist painting and one of the rarest guns featured on the show.

9.00 **A Very English Scandal.** New series. Fact-based drama, starring Hugh Grant as Jeremy Thorpe, the leader of the Liberal Party in the 1960s and 1970s who was accused of conspiring to murder his lover.

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 **Imagine: Rupert Everett.** Behind the scenes on the actor's 10-year journey of writing, directing and starring in a film telling the story of Oscar Wilde's last years.

11.35 **The Women's Football Show.** A look at the biggest issues in the women's game, focusing on matters at both club and international level.

12.10 Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.15** BBC News.

BBC2

6.35 Glorious Gardens from Above. (R) **7.20** Life in a Cottage Garden with Carol Klein. (R) **7.50** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.50** Countryfile. (R) **9.45** The Beechgrove Garden. (R) **10.15** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.45** Spring Kitchen with Tom Kerridge. (R) **12.30** Great Manchester Run. **2.30** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.15** Garden Rescue. (R) **4.00** The World's Most Extraordinary Homes. (R) **5.00** Great Manchester Run Highlights.

6.00 **Dragons' Den.** The panel assesses the merits of a former bricklayer's mortar-board invention, a mother-of-two's child-tracking device, and a 25-year-old designer's wheelchair accessory. (R)

7.00 **Million Pound Menu.** Fred Sirieix presents the fine dining challenge which follows people who work in the food business as they seek major investment to launch their own restaurants. (R)

8.00 **Neanderthals: Meet Your Ancestors.** Part two of two. Archaeologist Ella Al-Shamahi and actor Andy Serkis examine the reasons Neanderthals became extinct, and their surviving influence on modern humans.

9.00 **Burma with Simon Reeve.** Part two of two. Simon ventures into Burma's highlands, where he attends a fire balloon festival, visits an elephant sanctuary, and goes in search of a rebel army.

10.00 **Atlanta.** Earn spends all his money to get Paper Boi's song played on the radio, leaving him with no cash for his date with Van. Meanwhile, Alfred and Darius get deeper into the drugs trade.

10.25 **Atlanta.** Paper Boi becomes agitated by the state of his online profile, and Earn continues to struggle with money troubles. Drama, starring Donald Glover.

10.50 **Later Weekend with Jools Holland.** Manic Street Preachers perform numbers from their new album, Resistance is Futile. The host also welcomes Boy Azooza, Gvenno, Melissa Laveaux, Ray LaMontagne, and Ben Howard.

11.50 **Film: Burke & Hare.** (2010) Two 19th-century grave robbers resort to murder to provide a doctor with fresh bodies for his anatomy lectures. Comedy horror, with Simon Pegg and Andy Serkis.

1.15 Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **2.15** Holby City. (R) **3.15** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Super 4. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** The Oddbods Show. (R) **7.05** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.30** Teen Titans Go! (R) **7.45** Adventure Time. (R) **8.00** The Haunted Hathaways. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Zoe Ball On Sunday. **9.25** Countrywise. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **11.00** Britain's Got Talent. (R) **12.15** Britain's Got More Talent. (R) **1.15** ITV News: Weather. **1.25** Ninja Warrior UK. (R) **2.30** Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs – India. (R) **3.00** Change Your Tune. **4.00** Tipping Point: Lucky Stars. (R) **5.00** The Chase: Celebrity Special. (R)

6.00 **Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule.** Chef Rosemary Shrager, Radio 2 DJ Liza Tarbuck, Doctor Who's fifth Doctor Peter Davison and X Factor stalwart Louis Walsh join the comedian for the madcap panel show. (R)

6.30 **ITV News:** Weather.

6.45 **Regional Programme:** Weather.

7.00 **Little Big Shots.** Dawn French meets a Bavarian musician, an aspiring guitarist and a three-year-old who is the youngest guest to appear on the show.

8.00 **Midsomer Murders.** Musicians compete for a prestigious award at the annual Thassingham Classical Music Festival – and Barmy and Winter are called in when the winner is brutally murdered and his priceless violin is stolen. Suspicion rapidly falls on the maestro organising the festival, who had planned to debut his new composition at the event and has stirred up resentment by turning a corporate one – while many suspect that the murder is the result of a curse. Guest starring James Fleet and Simon Callow. Last in the series.

10.00 **ITV News:** Weather.

10.20 **Peston on Sunday.** Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston, with Allegra Stratton. (R)

11.20 **This Time Next Year.** Davina McCall meets a wheelchair user who has vowed to walk again. Last in the series. (R)

12.10 Great Art. (R) **1.00** Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.15 The King of Queens. (R) **6.40** Motor Sport: FIA World Rallycross Championship. **7.35** Eat the Week. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Bake Off: The Professionals. (R) **1.30** The Simpsons. (R) **1.55** The Simpsons. (R) **2.25** The Simpsons. (R) **2.50** Film: Cheaper By the Dozen 2. (2005) Comedy sequel, starring Steve Martin. **4.40** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.40** Grand Designs. (R)

6.35 **Channel 4 News.**

7.00 **Christmas at the Chateau.** Dick Strawbridge and Angel Adoree await the arrival of their guests, who are expecting a luxurious Christmas at the chateau. Dick continues work on installing the lift, but the project tests his ingenuity to the limit, while Angel finds more valuables in the attic, including a collection of vinyl records. (R)

8.00 **Bake Off: The Professionals.** The four remaining teams are challenged to demonstrate their skills with chocolate, and for the first challenge, they must rely on their patisserie knowledge to succeed in a test where the recipe is a secret. They must then produce a showpiece on the theme of masked balls, which must incorporate two types of filled and moulded chocolates and a moving part.

9.00 **The Handmaid's Tale.** New series. The dystopian drama based on Margaret Atwood's novel returns. Offred reckons with the consequences of a dangerous decision while haunted by memories from her past and the violent beginnings of Gilead.

10.15 **Gogglebox.** Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R)

11.10 **First Dates.** Butler Kit wants to meet a man who shares his passion for the royal family, and football-mad James hopes to get the royal seal of approval from Kate Middleton lookalike Jodie. (R)

12.15 **Film: The Perks of Being a Wallflower.** (2012) Coming-of-age drama, starring Logan Lerman. **2.00** Meet the Markles. Amelia Dimoldenberg tries to win herself an invite to Harry and Meghan's wedding. (R) **2.55** Best Laid Plans. (R) **3.50** Gok's Fill Your House for Free. (R) **4.45** Mobil 1: The Grid. (R) **5.10** Fifteen to One. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Little Princess. **6.10** Wissper. (R) **6.20** Poppy Cat. (R) **6.30** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.35** The Secret Life of Puppies. (R) **6.40** Moly. (R) **6.45** Simon. (R) **6.50** Peppa Pig. (R) **7.00** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.10** Thomas & Friends. (R) **7.25** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.35** Only the Little White Van. (R) **7.45** Rusty Rivets. **8.00** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.15** Nella the Princess Knight. (R) **8.30** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.50** Hoogals. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.10** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.30** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.45** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.55** Peppa Pig. (R) **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.30** Naughty Dogs Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **11.20** Naughty Toddlers Make You Laugh Out Loud. **12.20** Funniest Ever Crazy Cats. (R) **1.20** Film: Garfield. (2004) Access. **2.25** Film: Garfield. (2004) Concluded. **2.55** Film: Batteries Not Included. (1987) **3.55** 5 News Update. **4.00** Film: Batteries Not Included. (1987) Concluded. **5.05** Film: The Lego Movie. (2014)

6.05 **Access.** Showbiz news and gossip.

6.10 **Film: The Lego Movie.** (2014) Concluded.

7.00 **Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away!** In Bedfordshire, agents Paul and Steve try to evict a community of travellers who have set up home in a private car park. Elsewhere, Stewart and Elmore chase a debt of over £3,000. (R)

7.55 **5 News Update.**

8.00 **Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away!** The enforcement agents try to mediate a dispute in a takeaway, and deal with rent evaders living in potentially deadly conditions. Plus, a businessman faces ruin. (R)

8.55 **5 News Weekend.**

9.00 **Top of the Box 1985 with Matthew Kelly.** New series. The presenter takes a look back at the most popular TV from a past year, beginning with 1985, featuring 'Allo 'Allo!, Bullseye, Name that Tune and Crossroads.

11.00 **Film: Role Models.** (2008) After a brush with the law, two irresponsible men have to look after troubled kids as community service. Comedy, with Paul Rudd, Seann William Scott and Christopher Mintz-Plasse.

1.05 SuperCasino. **3.10** The Yorkshire Vet. (R) **4.00** Get Your Tatts Out: Kavos Ink. (R) **4.45** House Doctor. (R) **5.10** Great Artists. (R) **5.35** Wildlife SOS. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Atlantis – The Evidence **8.00** How to Build a Nuclear Submarine **9.00** The Greatest Tomb On Earth: Secrets of Ancient China **10.00** Dina **11.35** British Gardens in Time: Great Dixter **12.35** Science and Islam **1.35** Atlantis – The Evidence **2.35** How to Build a Nuclear Submarine **3.35** Close

ITV2
11.35 Take Me Out Celebrity Special **12.40** Film: Peter Pan (2003) **1.40** FYI Daily **1.45** Film: Peter Pan (2003) **2.50** You've Been Framed! Gold Top 100 Weddings **3.50** Britain's Got Talent **5.05** Britain's Got More Talent **6.05** Film: Johnny English Reborn (2011) **7.05** FYI Daily **7.10** Film: Johnny English Reborn (2011) **8.00** Film: Jurassic World (2015) **10.25** Family Guy **11.55** American Dad! **12.50** The Cleveland Show **1.20** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.20** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
5.00 Harry and Meghan – The Royal Wedding **6.00** Lewis **8.00** Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs **9.00** Joanna Lumley's Japan **10.00** Cilla **11.00** Wire in the Blood **1.10** Blue Murder **2.25** Liverpool 1 **3.20** Road to Avonlea **5.00** George and Mildred **5.50** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4
11.15 Live British Touring Car Championship. Coverage of round three from Thruxton. **6.00** UEFA European U17 Championship Live. Coverage of the final (Kick-off 6.15pm). **8.30** River Monsters **9.00** Film: Green Zone (2010) **10.00** FYI Daily **10.05** Film: Green Zone (2010) **11.15** FYI Daily **12.20** Film: Tango & Cash (1989) **1.25** Minder **2.30** Tommy Cooper **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
12.00 Film: Ever After: A Cinderella Story (1998) **2.30** The Goldbergs **3.00** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **3.30** Young Sheldon **4.00** The Big Bang Theory: Shamy's Story **8.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. **10.00** Film: The Purge (2013) **11.40** The Inbetweeners **12.55** The Big Bang Theory **1.50** Rude Tube **2.50** Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. **3.40** Hollyoaks **Film4**

11.00 ParaNorman (2012) **1.00** The Rugrats Movie (1999) **2.35** Dunston Checks In (1996) **4.20** The Dam Busters (1955) **6.50** Paper Towns (2015) **9.00** The Heat (2013) **11.20** Extract (2010) **1.10** The Second Mother (2015) **3.30** Close



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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Murder, She Baked: Just Desserts,
Channel 5, 3.15pm
Amateur sleuth Hannah Swensen is thrilled when she is chosen as a guest expert for the first Eden Lake Dessert Bake-Off, but when fellow judge Leonard Bishop is found murdered, she once again takes it upon herself to find herself to find the killer. Mystery, starring Alison Sweeney. (2017)

TUESDAY
Fatal Performance, **Channel 5, 3.15pm**
An aspiring actress, working as a waitress, is offered a lucrative contract to impersonate the wife of a businessman during a prestigious reception event in their home. Thriller, starring Nicholle Tom. (2013)

WEDNESDAY
Hummingbird, **Channel 5, 11pm**
A haunted special forces soldier returns to London from Afghanistan and assumes another man's identity, hoping to make a fresh start. He is drawn into the city's criminal underworld, and plots revenge against the gangster who killed his girlfriend. Crime thriller, with Jason Statham and Agata Buzek. (2013)



Hummingbird, Wednesday, Channel 5, 11pm

THURSDAY
Killer Switch, **Channel 5, 3.20pm**
A woman accidentally picks up the wrong suitcase from the airport baggage reclaim on her way to her daughter's graduation. Later, she receives a phone call from a man claiming he will harm her daughter if she fails to follow his instructions to return his suitcase. Thriller, starring Jamie Luner. (2016)

FRIDAY
Stranger in the House, **Channel 5, 3.15pm**
Newlywed Jade returns from her honeymoon to discover her recently widowed father has been seduced by the caregiver she hired to look after him in her absence. The strange situation becomes even more suspicious when Jade's dad suddenly dies from a fall, and when the young woman finds out her new step-mother is the sole beneficiary of a recently amended will, she becomes convinced a murder has taken place. Thriller, with Emmanuelle Vaugier. (2016)

Marking 70 years of the National Health Service

On July 5, 1948, the Labour Government's Health Secretary Aneurin Bevan launched the National Health Service at Park Hospital in Manchester.

It was the climax of a hugely ambitious plan to bring good healthcare to all, cradle to grave.

For the first time, hospitals, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, opticians and dentists were brought together under one umbrella organisation to provide services that are free for all at the point of delivery.

Today, the NHS in England and Wales is one of the largest employers in the world, employing around 1.3 million people – approximately one in 23 of the working population.

Each month, 23 million people visit their GP surgery or practice nurse, and in a typical week, 1.4 million people will receive help in their home from the service.

NHS ambulances make over 50,000 emergency journeys each

week, while NHS 111 handles 20,000 calls a day or eight million a year.

The UK's first heart transplant took place in May 1968 at the National Heart Hospital in Marylebone, London, while 10 years later, the world's first test-tube baby Louise Joy Brown was born at Oldham General Hospital.

However, there have also been setbacks, and during this century alone there have been outbreaks of MRSA and Clostridium difficile, growing waiting lists and the Alder Hey organs scandal.

Nevertheless, one thing's for sure, we all owe a massive debt to the devoted medics and staff who make a massive difference to our lives every day.

And to mark the NHS's 70th anniversary this summer, Paul O'Grady is hosting a glittering awards show at London's Hilton Park Lane tonight.

Major stars from the worlds of showbiz, sport and politics, including Prince William, the

Duchess of Cornwall, Elton John, Shirley Bassey, Simon Cowell, Tom Jones, Amanda Holden and Boy George will be in attendance, as the people who have made the service what it is are celebrated.

"We've all experienced the NHS at some stage, myself included," O'Grady admits.

"I'm thrilled and delighted to be hosting the new NHS Heroes Awards as this wonderful institution celebrates its 70th year.

"We will be honouring the incredible medical staff and also the dedicated work of porters, cleaners and of course the army of volunteers without whom the NHS could not function."

As NHS England chief executive Simon Stevens explains, the evening should be a fitting way to pay honour the unsung heroes: "It's great that the Mirror and ITV have come together to pay tribute to NHS staff in this, our 70th anniversary year.

"There has never been a better time to recognise the extraordinary care they deliver every day."



Paul O'Grady hosts The NHS Heroes Awards, Monday, ITV, 8.30pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Manchester: A Year of Hate Crimes
Channel 4, 10.35pm
Documentary filmed over the past year in Greater Manchester at a time when the city experienced its worst terror attack in living memory – the Manchester Arena bombing. The fallout from that added to existing tensions in one of the country's most multicultural regions and this programme takes viewers to the frontline of racial and religious hatred as police officers respond to hundreds of reports a month, and also hears from community leaders attempting to deal with abuse and heal the divides.

TUESDAY
Love Your Garden: NHS Special
ITV, 8pm
Alan Titchmarsh and his team create a garden for the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital. This gargantuan effort is in response to letters from young patients, some of whom were victims of the nearby Manchester Arena bombing, requesting an outdoor space for patients, families and staff to seek respite in. The host meets the youngsters who wrote to him, some with life-threatening conditions and others like Lily Harrison who was treated by the hospital after receiving shrapnel wounds at the Ariana Grande concert a year ago.

Manchester: The Night of the Bomb
BBC2, 9pm
May 22nd, 2017 should have been a peaceful spring night for music lovers desperate to see their idol. Then a Manchester-born man detonated a homemade bomb at an Ariana Grande pop concert, killing 22 people and himself. The atrocity at Manchester Arena was Britain's deadliest terrorist attack since the London bombings of July 7, 2005. In this moving documentary, cameras reveal the story of that night through the eyes of teenage girls who survived the attack and key members of the emergency services.

WEDNESDAY
The Secret Life of the Zoo
Channel 4, 8pm
In the final episode of the series, keepers prepare for the difficult task of transporting Giraffe Kidepo to a new zoo, and Kidepo's brother Narus is not making the move any easier. Meanwhile, silvery gibbon Alvin is keen to get close to his partner Tili again, and after diving headfirst into an empty pool one too many times, keepers decide a trip to the vet is in order for caiman lizard Gary to

see if there is an underlying problem. Elsewhere, dominant warthog Magnum is being challenged by fellow warthog Dobby, so keepers decide it is time to move Dobby to a zoo in Germany.

THURSDAY
Channel 4, 9pm
Continuing the sci-fi drama set in a parallel world where synthetic humanoids try to live side by side with real people. Following a police raid at the Railyard, a grieving Max must deal with the fallout of his life-or-death decision – and things only get more difficult for the leader when rebel Synth Agnes begins an anti-human campaign. Laura discovers a secret operation that could threaten Synth survival. Leo's recovery takes a surprising turn and Joe discovers Karen and Sam's secret – has their cover been blown?



High & Dry, Friday, Channel 4, 10.30pm

FRIDAY
The Bridge
BBC2, 9pm
Swedish journalist and radical left-wing expert Richard Dahlqvist broadcasts live on the internet, denying Red October's involvement in the murder. Saga and Henrik question him, finding what he is says is wide of the truth. They also continue to question Taariq, though finding him unwilling to cooperate form a plan to expose him. The duo search the homeless Danish girls' hiding place, finding evidence that directs them to new lead. Scandinavian crime drama, in Danish and Swedish, starring Sofia Helin and Thure Lindhardt.

High & Dry
Channel 4, 10.30pm
As we reach the fourth episode of Marc Wootton's sitcom, it's clear that the tropical island that our castaways are stranded on is no paradise. Yet Brett (Wootton) is shocked this week to discover that Doug (Harry Peacock) would still like to be rescued and is planning to build a raft to reach what he thinks is a nearby inhabited island, as spied through the telescopic lens on a salvaged camera. Meanwhile, Susan (Grace Rex) has just been spurned by Douglas – can Brett take advantage of her vulnerable state.

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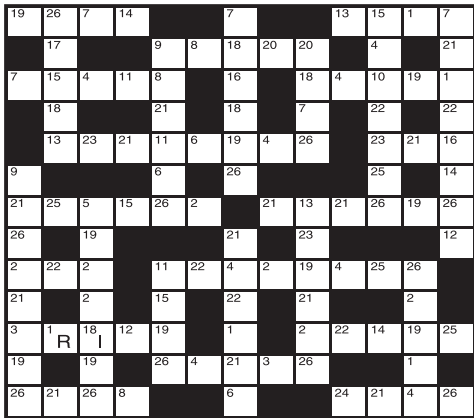
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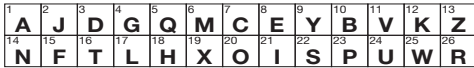
No.480

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:



Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

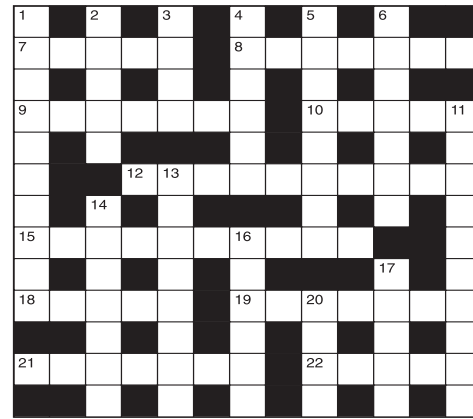
Cryptic Clues:

Across

7. No reverse charge for a cause of tears (5)
8. Difficulty of initially taking Russian money (7)
9. Present at present, but not in any place (7)
10. He apparently marks his choice wrong (5)
12. Compels to study 4s (10)
15. He has lots to sell (10)
18. Top of 4 cut off hair (5)
19. Ruth upset general (7)
21. Study kind husband (7)
22. Consumed some of the fare at English hotel (5)

Down

1. Neutralise what the shopkeeper did? (10)
2. What wives think? (5)
3. 100 in 1 x 1 (4)
4. Accent obvious in tension? (6)
5. The opposite of 'to study poetry'? (8)
6. To the sailor, it's an awful thing not to indulge (7)
11. Nature's art as found in eating place (10)
13. Errand for nothing, perhaps, was an oversight (8)
14. Shows films behind which one may hide (7)
16. Deny entrance to the north-east (6)
17. In which more than one become one (5)
20. Paradise - an oriental vice-spot (4)



Quick Clues:

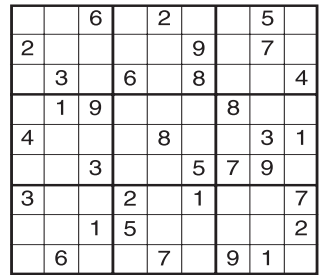
Across

7. Drone (5)
8. Vocation (7)
9. Frequenter (7)
10. Very swift (5)
12. Insignificance (10)
15. Artifice (10)
18. Cede (5)
19. Voter (7)
21. Narration (7)
22. Fluctuation (5)

Down

1. Falsehood (10)
2. Sphere (5)
3. Worry (4)
4. Receive (6)
5. Ominous (8)
6. Easier (7)
11. Deter (10)
13. Tale (8)
14. Non-attendance (7)
16. Weak (6)
17. Blemish (5)
20. Otherwise (4)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

9	5	3	1	7	8	6	2	4
7	8	6	3	2	4	9	5	1
4	1	2	9	6	5	3	8	7
1	6	7	2	3	9	5	4	8
2	4	8	5	1	6	7	3	9
3	9	5	4	8	7	2	1	6
6	3	4	7	5	1	8	9	2
5	7	9	8	4	2	1	6	3
8	2	1	6	9	3	4	7	5

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
 CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Cast about; 8 Hoe; 9 Redoubtable; 11 Eastern; 12 Their; 13 Utopia; 15 Instep; 17 Aunts; 18 Therapy; 20 Cold-hearted; 22 Off; 23 Nurseries. Down: 2 Awe; 3 Amuse; 4 Outing; 5 Tibetan; 6 The best part; 7 Geography; 10 Disconnects; 11 Education; 14 Insulin; 16 Etcher; 19 Erase; 21 Eve.
 QUICK - Across: 1 Impotence; 8 Own; 9 Inclination; 11 Abridge; 12 Odour; 13 Crowds; 15 Device; 17 Spool; 18 Mistake; 20 Advancement; 22 Out; 23 Restfully. Down: 2 Man; 3 Tried; 4 Nearer; 5 Episode; 6 Consolidate; 7 Interfere; 10 Corroborate; 11 Accession; 14 Deliver; 16 Amends; 19 Shelf; 21 Nil.

Quiz

1. How many players are there in a Rugby League team?
2. Which island's parliament is called the Chief Pleas?
3. Who plays David Brent in the BBC sitcom 'The Office'?
4. Who was the last viceroy of India?
5. Which former political leader's first names are Jeremy John Durham?
6. Whose novel 'Dr Zhivago' was first published in Italy in 1957?
7. What type of animal is a tarsier?
8. What is the meaning of the title of Wagner's opera 'Götterdämmerung'?
9. Which volcano's name is Aztec for 'smoking mountain'?
10. Which disease used to be called consumption?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Suffolk; 2 Gooseberry; 3 Humber Bridge; 4 Bud Flanagan; 5 Asgard; 6 Tony Booth; 7 Basingstoke; 8 Blackbird; 9 Rome; 10 Genetics.

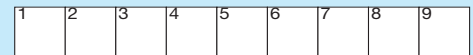
Niner: DEFIANTLY

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

145587
1499859
7263

gives a fish,
gives shellfish,
gives an amphibian.



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Blockbuster you don't want to miss

IT used to be a movie rental shop. Now it is a blockbusting Asian restaurant.

Under the direction of Ruhel Ahmed, Panshi has made a 'reel' impact since it premiered at the former Blockbuster store in Hayes Way, Heath Hayes, next to Tesco, around 15 months ago.

Ruhel is the leading man, taking centre stage with a team of around 10, many of them family members. The scene was set back in 1980, when Ruhel's family first entered the industry. Ruhel himself has more than 20 years' experience under his belt, and has an accolade to his name, winning a Curry Chef of the Year award for excellence at the World Curry Expo in 2012/13.

Changes have been made since the spacious restaurant opened, with Ruhel's latest big budget production to install a central partition, with gentle, but exquisite lighting. There are booths for privacy, as well as round tables to seat a party of up to 50 diners among the 160 covers.

SPILLAGES

What I particularly like about the Panshi is that there are no cumbersome tablecloths. The bare tables mean any spillages can just be wiped away without having to focus on messy material for the duration of the meal. Of course, this also makes it easier to get in and out without the worry of getting tangled in the tablecloth or pulling it away.

The menu features many exclusive items, as well as specials and chef's recommendations, with credits including beef dishes only available at Panshi. Ruhel takes immense pride in these creations, which take top billing.

"I love creating. And I know that you cannot find these dishes anywhere else," he said.

That would apply to my own main course. We skipped

Sizzling - the punchy Panshi Grilled Deluxe



The restaurant's interior with its central partition



starters, opting just for poppadoms, before I then took a punt on the Panshi Grilled Deluxe, with its assembled cast of tandoori chicken, lamb tikka and sheek kebab, served in a sizzling sauce that Ruhel himself is responsible for. The heat was overpowering, and left me, temporary at least – and to my partner's delight – speechless as the fumes hit me.

Often when food is so hot, it takes away the flavour. However, this was simply exquisite, with chunky, tender, pieces of meat accompanied by a tasty sauce, although Ruhel would not give away any trade secrets and tell

me what the secret ingredient was. It is well worth discovering, though. But, take one cold drink at least to douse to fire inside.

Sharon chose the makkon chicken curry, which she assured me compared more than favourably with others she had tried.

Ruhel added he was forever looking to enhance his customers' experience. "We are always trying to improve our customer service and give better quality and presentation," he said.

Despite this, Panshi is proving a box-office hit, with

a regular clientele and theme nights that also bring the customers in. They also supply outdoor catering.

Our visit was relatively early on a Thursday, yet there were already plenty of diners trying to get a prime seat.

The epilogue for me was a pina colada dessert, of coconut and pineapple ice cream. We'll no doubt be back for a sequel.

Panshi is open seven days a week from 5pm and is fully licensed. Call 01543 277877 or visit www.panshicannock.com

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FULL BATHROOM INSTALLATION AVAILABLE

Quality workmanship at competitive prices.

Fully insured. Portfolio available.

For a free quote call Ian on
01384 412796 or **07890 894631**



Tree Surgeon

TREE SURGEONS

11 YEARS EXPERIENCE IN ALL
ASPECTS OF TREE
MAINTENANCE & TREE
FELLING, STUMP REMOVAL,
HEDGE TRIMMING

CALL US ON:

07817 553 346
0121 553 1075



info@terrafirma-arb.co.uk
www.terrafirma-arb.co.uk

Local Specialists



Our Specialist Section offers you a wide range of
local businesses and tradesman to deal with your
needs and requirements.

BROADCAST YOUR BUSINESS

WITH THE COMPLETE PRODUCTION OF A COMPELLING VIDEO

1. PRE-PRODUCTION PLANNING

Where we find out about you!

2. ON-LOCATION RECORDING

The important bit.

3. AUDIO PRODUCTION

Music or voice over?

4. POST PRODUCTION

Where the finishing touches
happen.

5. VIDEO ADVERTISING

Want even more exposure?

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Source: www.mnadigital.co.uk/video-advertising

MNA DIGITAL

To advertise your business and reach more than 46,000 potential customers...

1

Call us on...
01902 319590

2

E-mail us at...
mark.moore@expressandstar.co.uk

3

Post to...
Mark Moore, Halesowen Chronicle, Black Country
House, Rounds Green Road, Oldbury B69 2DG

Funeral Directors

N.E. DOWNING
(Blackheath) Ltd

Independent
family run
Funeral Directors
24 hour service
Halesowen
0121 422 2794

www.nedowning.co.uk

1

Family

Elderly & Disabled

WORLD OF MOBILITY
Stourbridge's longest established
Family Run Mobility Store
Brettle Lane, Ambleside,
Stourbridge DY8 4BS. Open Mon-Sat.
01384 378252
WREKIN STAIRLIFTS reconditioned
lifts from £750. New available.
01952 405397/07897 273617

2

Leisure
Time

Camping Equipment

HI GEAR Tourer 6, six berth tent,
used one week only. £100.
Please call 01746 710670.

PENINE AZTEC CAMPER 4 Berth
folding camper with awning and
extras, ready to go. £575 ono
07583 076832

VW TRANSPORTER T25
CAMPER VAN

1989, good condition,
many extras.
Ill health forces sale.

£8,500 or very near offer.
01902 497824.

Caravans/ Motorhomes

A BEAUTIFUL PARK NR LUDLOW
35x12 caravans from £10,000. Gym
Par 3 golf, bowls, why go further?
www.bcpark.co.uk 01584823433.



ABI BRIGHTSTAR AWARD
WINNING LUXURY TWO
BERTH TOURER

End bathroom, large porch
awning, new protec cover,
motor mover, many extras, very
good condition,

£1,200.

Telephone 07565 929084

CARAVAN FOR SALE Bailey
Senator Vermont 2 berth caravan
with all equipment and ready to
go. £2,950 ono 01902 843584

LUNAR QUASAR 544
CARAVAN
2014.

End bed, very good condition,
includes Motormover.
£11,000.
01902 757955.

HOLIDAY HOME FOR SALE

2012 ABI Ambleside 2 bedroom
luxurious and spacious model
£33,995 on an immaculate & family
friendly 5 star park in the breath
taking location of historic Harlech
with spectacular beaches, castle
and golf course minutes away
www.miniworldpark.co.uk
call Jayne or Carl 01766 780286

Holiday Home for sale -2017 Willerby Wrekin

BRAND NEW Limited edition, enhanced
features £28,995 on a stunning 5 star park
in The Welsh Marches set above the River
Severn with private fishing & stunning
Bowling Pavilion Nr. Shrewsbury.
Will appeal to retired people & couples.

Call Ron or Margaret
01743 885080
www.sevenoakspark.co.uk



SWIFT BURGUNDY CARAVAN

2009 immaculate condition
sited 12 months of the year at
salt marsh bromyard. Three
bedrooms, double glazing,
brand new Worcester Bosch
boiler.
£16,000 ono
07592 165066.



SWIFT FAIRWAY

Two berth
Only used four times.
Condition as new.
Under 1,000 miles.
With all equipment, nothing
extra to buy.
Ready to use.
£5,750.
Details, 01902 636363.

VENTURA Porch awning, burgundy,
200 x 260cm. £780 new, never
used. £350. 01384 379260.

Self Catering Holidays

BURNHAM-ON-SEA

Self Catering Holiday
Apartments
Disabled Facilities
Pet Friendly
01278 794111
www.GoSomerset.co.uk

Travel Abroad

READERS ARE REMINDED
to check with any Advertisers
that their holiday costs are fully
covered by a recognised bonding or
insurance scheme.

Yorkshire

YORKSHIRE DALES

Meadow Holidays
Country Cottages / Suites in Wensleydale
"Weeks from £209 per couple"
"Weekends just £99 per couple"
Families Welcome
Walk in scenic countryside by waterfalls or
visit historic market towns with friendly inns
Brochure (24hrs) 01969 624145
email: ritalimeadowholidays.com
www.meadowholidays.com

mind, body & soul

Massage

Mobile deep tissue
aromatherapy massage
treatment by
qualified therapist
By appointment 07437 569187

Music Shop

GUITAR GEAR 4 Music (Strat Copy)
15 watt amp. Very good condition.
£60 ono. 07719 028059.

Sports & Leisure

FreeAds
IT'S FREE, IT'S EASY
To sell items upto £250.
Online at
[bookanad.
expressandstar.co.uk](http://bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk)

what's on

Auctions

**ANTIQUE /
COLLECTABLES AUCTION**
CALFHEATH VILLAGE HALL,
CALFHEATH, CANNOCK, WV10 7DW
MONDAY 21ST MAY
AUCTION STARTS 6PM - VIEWING 4.30PM
07775 951464

Book Fair

BOOK FAIR Kinver Community
Centre, DY7 6ER, inc postcards.
Sunday 20th May and 17th June.
Next Antique Fair June 3rd.
Est 1979, Waverley. Refreshments
available. 0121 550 4381.

Markets

**STOURBRIDGE
CAR BOOT**
At Stourbridge
Rugby Club
Open every Wednesday
from 16th May
07957 399964

3 Home & Services

Collectables & Memorabilia

ROYAL ALBERT Moss Rose, 53
pieces, £400.
07811 150653.

Furniture

DINING TABLE Mahogany rectangular
with curved edges, extends, 8
upholstered chairs. Very good
condition. £65 ono. 07979 560284.

In Your Garden

**C B SHEDS &
FENCING**
We supply & fit. Free quotes.
Call: 01922 720270
We also supply sleepers and decking

Items For Sale

ADVERTISERS ARE
REMINDING
That the Business
Advertisements (Disclosure)
Order of 1977 requires that
advertisements must clearly
differentiate between Private
and Trade.

CORRUGATED GALVANISED
Sheets. New. £8 can deliver. Also
box profile and PVC/polycarb.
David Broughton on 07834 489558.

MULLITCO WOOD TURNING
LATHE

37ins bed max, head stock,
centre point, face plate, collection
of quality turning tools and
sundry items including bench
£100.
01902 895356.

HAVE YOU CHECKED your adver-
tisement today? We would respect-
fully remind advertisers that it is
their responsibility to inform the
publishers of any mistakes or in-
accuracies on the first day of publica-
tion.

Items Wanted

READERS ARE ADVISED to
carefully consider all of their options
before agreeing to the sale of any
of their items.
SPECTRUM GAMES Wanted, plus
any Spectrum 128k+ 2 computer
wanted also any old Crash or your
Sinclair Magazines. 01902 892918.

A BEST CASH PRICE



FOR ALL RAILWAY COLLECTIONS

Any gauge or age
Hornby/Bachmann/Bowmans/
Roundhouse/Graham/Farsh/
any live steam. Also Die Cast,
Corgi, Dinky, Spot On.
01384 836219/07891 713547
thetrainmaster67@
hotmail.com



A BEST CASH PRICE PAID FOR DIE CAST CARS / LORRIES

Britains, Corgi, Dinky,
Spot on, Tri-ang, Danbury Mint
and Manod Engines.
Best prices paid.
Any condition.
Collections bought.
Telephone 01922 327897
or 07976 691563.

Loans

READERS ARE REMINDING
that they may require profes-
sional advice before entering into
obligations.

specialists at your service

Aerials

**AA DIGITAL
AERIALS**
AERIALS FITTED FROM £79.99
01902 858191 • 01384 429166
01543 439095 • 01922 716029

A AERIAL AND SKY SPECIALIST
Digital aerials, CCTV cameras, TV
wall mount fitted. 07850 330251.

CLASSIFIEDS "JUST WHAT I NEEDED"



"I am very pleased
with the response
I get from
my Classified
Advertising Contract"

Steve -
AA Digital Aerials

For great business
results call
01902 319 191

ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

Alarms/Security

PREMIER ALARMS

Supplied and Fitted £249
Servicing and Repairs
12 Months Warranty
All areas covered
All quotes beaten!
Call: 0121 601 9791

Building Services

DAVIES & SON BUILDERS
All Building & Roofing Work
Driveways, Landscaping
Over 40 year exp | All work guaranteed
Free Quotes: 07837 994465
01902 579 592

Fencing

**PORTWAY
FENCING**
SPECIAL OFFER
10 Bays of quality fencing, concrete posts,
gravel boards £795
Heavy duty panels supplied & fitted.
0121 531 5250 / 07866 137 656
Mon - Fri 9am - 4.30pm
Sat 9am - 12 noon
83 Portway Rd, W'bury
www.portwayfencing.co.uk

CLASSIFIEDS "JUST WHAT I NEEDED"



"I am extremely happy with
the service I get from my
Express & Star Classified Sales
Representatives and would
recommend them to anyone! They
have done a very professional job
with my website so I get online
enquiries as well now."

Michael -
Portway Fencing

For great business
results call
01902 319 191

ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

Gardening Services

GARDENS TIDIED from £5 per
garden. 25 years experience. Call
01902 713106 / 07813 184086.

Gas Fitting

READERS ARE ADVISED
To check that anyone
carrying out any Gas work is
Gas Safe Registered.

It is an offence under the Gas
Safety (Installation and Use)
Regulations 1998 to carry out
gas work in the UK without
being on the Gas Safe Register.

House Clearances

A ABSOLUTE BEST cash price paid
for house clearances and bereave-
ments. Also removals undertaken.
07852 172641 / 07710 360327 /
01902 534021

Landscaping

J D's Landscaping and Building
Bricklaying and all paving work
Fencing and gates
Conservatory and porch bases
FREE QUOTES
Call John 01384 326405 or
07719 807564

Plastering

STEVES PLASTERING SERVICE
Clean and Reliable. All Work
Undertaken. All Areas. Call
0121 567 5919 / 07977 262943.

Removals

CALL DEAN NOW: For all your
Removal needs. 07429 453029/
01902 830870 / 01384 940260.

KT HOUSE REMOVALS
12 years experience.
SPECIALISE IN FULL LOADS.
LOCAL OR DISTANCE. FULLY INSURED.
Free Quotes - Call Ric on:
07771 727119

Roofing

MG ROOFING
Flat Roofing, Tiling, Roof Repairs,
Fascias and Gutters.
Call 01902 238989 /
07580 465449.
www.mgroofingwestmidlands.co.uk

Rubbish Removal

LET'S TALK RUBBISH No Skips
Needed. Load/Remove any Waste,
House Clearance. 07969 626362

Skip Hire

**Grinsells
Skip Hire LTD**
Mini, Midi, Maxi, Large Skips.
Monday to Friday.
Saturday half day.
0121 555 6060

t.v. / home entertainment

Service

AERIAL AND TV SPECIALIST
Any TV Repairs. Digital aerials, sky,
CCTV cameras. TV wall mounts
and TV set ups. 07850 330251.

CLASSIFIEDS "JUST WHAT I NEEDED"



"TV Link are really
pleased with their
response from their
Classified Campaign"

Bill - TV Link

For great business
results call
01902 319 191

ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

4

Pets &
Animals

Equestrian Corner

ALL READERS are advised to
check if Horses, Donkeys or Ponies
have the required Passport infor-
mation, this is a legal requirement.

Pets Corner

NOTICE TO READERS
Please be aware that when
purchasing a puppy there are
some simple guidelines you can
follow to ensure that you are not
purchasing from a Puppy
Farmer:

1. Try to ensure you visit the
puppy whilst it is still with it's
Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a
puppy from any other location
than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any
KC documentation, if pedigree.
Whilst Midland News
Association publications take
great care to avoid publication
of advertisements from Puppy
Farmers we cannot accept any
liability should readers
purchase from this kind of
establishment.

6

Property

Accommodation To Let

NOTICE TO READERS
It is an offence under the Accom-
modation Agencies Act 1953, for an
Agency to charge a fee simply for
the registration of your require-
ments and/or supplying particulars
of premises to let.

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek
independent legal advice before
entering into any financial commit-
ments/contracts.

A SMART SINGLE EN SUITE room
in a Shared house, Netherton.
£85 p.w. inc. bills. No DSS. 2 weeks
deposit. 07940 116130.

Mobile Homes

SHOWROOM CONDITION

PARK HOME STATELY ALBION

2 bedroom, one ensuite. Plus
bathroom. Recent carpet fitted
throughout, double unit.

Close to Shrewsbury.

£88,000.

Telephone 01691 682118
or 07975 643737.

SHOWROOM CONDITION

PARK HOME STATELY ALBION

2 bedroom, one ensuite. Plus
bathroom. Recent carpet fitted
throughout, double unit.

Close to Shrewsbury.

£88,000.

Telephone 01691 682118
or 07975 643737.

Overseas Property

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek
independent legal advice before
entering into any financial commit-
ments.

BOOK YOUR ADVERTISEMENTS OR FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS ONLINE AT

[bookanad.
expressandstar.co.uk](http://bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk)

and become one
of hundreds of
customers
who regularly
receive
exclusive
special offers
& discounts.



ClassifiedAds

Properties Wanted

FAST CASH FOR YOUR PROPERTY™

- Repossessions stopped
- Houses bought in any condition
- Legal fees paid
- Probate Estates Welcome
- Mortgages / Loans Cleared

CASH PAID WITHIN DAYS!**0800 121 6007** **OAKWOOD HOMEBUYERS**

Friendly, local company here to help you 7 days a week. Est. 10 years.

www.oakwood-homebuyers.com

CHEVROLET SPARK 1.7
2012, Blue, 1.2 engine, petrol, 35,000 miles, hpi clear, full service history, well looked after, all receipts kept, air con, alloy wheels, CD and MP3 player, ipod plug, electric mirrors, all electric windows, climate control, traction control, cheap on fuel.
£2,600
07851 378721.



NISSAN NOTE TEKNA
2008, 1.6, 78000 miles, petrol, full service history, one previous owner, drives excellently, a/c, radio CD.
£1,995 ono
07977939497



VAUXHALL ANTARA 2.2 DIESEL
2015, 115,000 miles, black exclusive model, long MoT, new tyres, brakes, excellent condition,
£5,250.
07948 309727



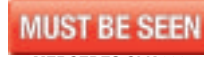
VW GOLF 2.0 TDI SPORT
06 reg.
5 door. Black.
Six gears. 136,000 miles.
New water pump and cam belt 2017.
12 months MoT.
Good condition.
£1,495.
07787 410300.



FORD FIESTA 1.4 FLAME
2004 reg, MoT April 2019, immaculate paintwork/interior, electric windows, air conditioning, radio/cd, reliable, garaged,
£800.
Viewing Birmingham
0121 384 7888 or 07771 428793.



MERCEDES CLK 230 CONVERTIBLE
2002.
Silver.
Good condition.
Excellent inside.
£1,275.
07902 387527.



MITSUBISHI SHOGUN
SWB, TD, sport, manual, 95, bull bars, tow bar, 80,000 miles, FSH, sunroof, 4k miles per year, pristine condition.
£1,500 No offers.
07848 820177.



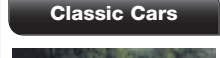
RENAULT CLIO 1.2 57 REG
Low mileage.
Silver.
Excellent condition inside and out.
Full MoT.
£1,250.
07902 387527.

VAUXHALL ASTRA 1600
06 reg, full MoT, runs well, clean and tidy inside, electric windows, cd player/radio
£995 ono.
01902 862610.

VOLVO S60 2.0 TURBO SE AUTO
54 Reg., one owner from new, low mileage, full electric pack, leather electric seats, silver.
£995.
07599 220780.



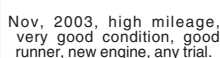
VW BEETLE 1.6
51 reg, 84,000 miles, ideal first car, MoT, stereo, .
£650 ono.
Telephone 07864 842076.



JAGUAR XJS 4.0 AUTOMATIC
Great condition for year, 1991, MoT to October.
£4,950
01952 750768
or
07503 252082



FORD TRANSIT VAN 240
Nov, 2003, high mileage, very good condition, good runner, new engine, any trial.



HONDA C70
V reg., 5,800 miles, very good condition.
£700.
07836 568903.



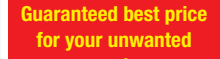
ABC AUTO SALVAGE WANTED URGENT
Scrap & MOT Failures Best Prices Paid ELV Registered Spares Always Available
0121 557 0800 or 0121 557 0400.
Oldbury Area.



Scrap Vehicles
OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.



Vehicles Wanted
CROWN MOTORS
Guaranteed best price for your unwanted cars and vans
07903 549849
buyer will call



alan reed cars
Used cars wanted for cash Top prices paid. HP settled. Buyer could call.
01562 711083 / 07831 245313

spares & accessories

Accessories & Services

WANTED FOR WILLIAMS Trailer, anything considered. 07948 309727.

9 Local Information

Public Notices

PUBLIC & LEGAL NOTICES

For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to Marie Hogg on 01902 319694 or email marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk (remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

10 Personals

General

I AM TRYING TO TRACE L JONES
From Hordern Road and Whitmore Secondary School, 70 years ago.
Please contact Christine Broadbent (now Christine Went)
Box Number P21183, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.



LOOKING FOR M FOSTER
Last known address Great Bricklyn Street, Wolverhampton.
Had Brother Leonard that emigrated to Australia. Please contact Betty
Box Number P21177, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

WITNESS WANTED

For an accident between a grey Ford car and a black Nissan car on Sunday, February 25, 2018 at the junction of Erville Road and Eastcroft Road, Warstones area of Wolverhampton.

Phone 07855 370328.

**WOULD MRS L AND MR P CAMPBELL**

Who live in Wolverhampton. Please contact Mr. P Bates, who lives in South Shields, as he has lost your postal address and telephone number. Please write regarding this to. Box Number P21178, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

Personal

FREE TEXT MESSAGES from women wanting discreet ADULT FUN! Call 0121 620 2445 for full details. Discretion assured!

MEET sexy local women, genuine adult contacts, meet discreet exp ladies for adult fun, 07008 026348.

ONE EASY GOING MALE

looking for a slim lady who's fed up of being alone, I am a 62-70 aged male with plenty of get up and go.

What have you got to lose?

Make a fresh start in life.

Hope to hear from you.

Please send replies to

Box Number P21175,

Express and Star,

Queen Street,

Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

**RESPECTABLE MALE**

GSOH. No ties, non smoker, solvent, classic car owner, nice home.

Seeks respectable attractive female, 30-55, friendship / possible relationship.

Photo appreciated, will return.

Box Number P21184,

Express and Star,

Queen Street,

Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

**SOLVENT MALE 60'S**

Young at heart, various interests, WLTM female for Friendship / possible relationship to enjoy meals/days out, holidays, countryside etc.

Box Number P21182,

Express and Star,

Queen Street,

Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

Home Cash Buyer

Sell today, sign today, complete when u wish
£££ RENT BACK OPTIONS £££

Houses / Land Required

We also buy Commercial Property
Ring Paul 24/7 Local **07870 341 089**

Sandwell area: Call 0121 696 4154
Walsall & Cannock area: Call 01922 432049

Wolverhampton: Call 01902 489901
www.homecashbuyer.co.uk

Yes! HOMEBUYERS**We will buy your house fast!**

Free Valuation? Yes! Any House? Yes!
Fast Sale? Yes! Any Location? Yes!
No Fees? Yes! Any Condition? Yes!
FREE, GUARANTEED, instant offer today!

Call **0121 663 1403**
or text "Cash" to 66777
yeshomebuyers.com

7 Jobs

Employment Wanted

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT FCA
Seeks part-time accountancy / bookkeeping.
Based in Halesowen.
07860 357143.

Full Time General

WOLVERHAMPTON CAREERS FAIR

WEDNESDAY 23RD MAY 2018
10am to 2pm

**20 LOCAL EMPLOYERS ON THE DAY**

@ **MOLINEUX STADIUM, WOLVERHAMPTON, WV1 4QR**

FREE TO ATTEND NO REGISTRATION

WWW.THEJOBFAIRS.CO.UK

SHOOT!
THE ONLY READ FOR REAL FANS EVERY MONDAY

Express & Star

WANT TO SELL YOUR HOUSE FAST?

WE BUY TODAY

- COMPLETE IN AS LITTLE AS 7 DAYS
- HASSLE-FREE & FEE-FREE
- ANY HOUSE SITUATION OR CONDITION

"They take all the stress out of selling a house. They are considerate, understanding, helpful and supportive. Everything was straightforward and they eased a difficult time in our lives."
- Carolyn J., Verified Client

Rated 4.9/5.0
250 verified customer reviews

Contact us today for a free, no-obligation offer

0800 298 3140www.webuytoday.co.uk

WE BUY TODAY

Buy Property with Confidence

8 Motoring

Cars Over £1500

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.



AUDI A4 CONVERTIBLE
Blue, blue hood, tan leather interior, New cam belt and water pump fitted.
MoT'd, low mileage.
£2,195 ono.
07948 146611.



BMW 1 SERIES
127,000 miles, 2.0 diesel, manual, 5 seats, 5 doors, MoT has recently finished, full BMW service history, economical vehicle with cheap road tax, 2 previous owners, female driver, immaculate condition.
£3,250
07466 114543.



SELL IT FAST SELL IT LOCAL
01902 317878

ClassifiedAds

Cars Over £1500



CITROEN C1 RHYTHM
2008, 5dr, 65k, Grey, 7 service stamps, 2 keys, 12 months MoT. £20 tax. Serviced last week. Three months warranty.
£1,995
07867 473870



FIAT 500 DIESEL BY DESIGN (model not fuel)
2011, 55,600 miles, Diesel green metallic, EW, stop/start, AC, Bluetooth, usb, glass roof, CD player, CL, MOT, 1 previous owner, alloys, tinted rear windows, spare wheel, tool kit, FSH.
£4,000 ono.
07918 621300 (no text)



FORD B-MAX
Limited Edition, 16 plate, 1388 engine, 10,000 miles, silver metallic, black roof, black alloys, petrol, blue tooth, radio / CD, aircon, front foglights, electric window, sliding back doors, Immaculate condition.
£8,000
07788 684373.

VW GOLF 1.4 TSI SE 5d, 2010, 47k, Blue, Full VW Service history, 11 months MoT, Alloys, ac, Great condition. £5,500 ono 07825 93799.

If an ad is wrong, the ASA is here to put it right.

ASA.org.uk

Advertising Standards Authority

MASSIVE USED CAR SELECTION - ALL PRICED TO SELL!

VAUXHALL

10/60	Corsa Se Auto Green 32866 miles	£5,495
15/15	Corsa Excite Ac Ecoflex 3dr Black 15415 miles	£6,799
15/15	Vauxhall Corsa Limited Edition 3DR Red 20000 miles	£7,495
16/16	Corsa 3Dr HAT 1.4 75ps Energy A/C Sovereign 9000 miles	£7,777
15/65	Meriva Exclusiv Ac Grey 39821 miles	£7,777
15/15	Corsa Limited Edition Grey 14209 miles	£7,777
15/64	Astra Elite White 17124 miles	£7,999
15/15	Corsa Design Blue 15157 miles	£7,999
14/64	Astra Elite Silver 13403 miles	£8,888
18/67	Pre Reg Corsa 3dr HAT 1.4 75ps Sting Eco Lava Red 10 miles	£8,999
15/64	Astra Elite Red 4236 miles	£8,999
14/14	Mokka Tech Line Cdti S/S 5dr Black 39500 miles	£9,495
14/64	Insignia Sri Cdti Ecoflex 5dr White 32773 miles	£9,799
16/16	Adam HAT 1.2 70ps Energised Olympic 6124 miles	£9,799
16/16	Corsa 3Dr HAT 1.4 Energy A/C AUTO Flame Red 12000 miles	£9,799
15/15	Astra Elite Silver 27518 miles	£9,999
15/64	Astra Tech Line Gt 5dr Silver Lightning 23866 miles	£9,999
14/64	Mokka Se S/S 5dr Silver 16500 miles	£10,495
14/64	Vauxhall Mokka Se S/S 4x4 Turbo Blue 30000 miles	£10,795
15/65	Mokka HAT 5Dr 1.6 Cdti 136ps Ld/ed White 21950 miles	£10,999
15/15	Mokka Limited Edition Tur White 25904 miles	£10,999
15/64	Insignia Sri Nav Vx Cdtie 5dr White 43139 miles	£11,295
15/65	Mokka Exclusiv Turbo S/S Blue 34431 miles	£11,295
16/16	Mokka Exclusiv Turbo S/S 5dr Black 38000 miles	£11,495
15/65	Insignia Elite Nav Cdti A 5dr Silver 20559 miles	£11,999
15/15	Mokka Tech Line Turbo Aut 5dr Grey 4779 miles	£13,495
18/18	Pre Reg Corsa 3dr HAT 1.4 75ps Limited Edition Lava Red 10 miles	£13,495
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14/14	Skoda Citigo Elegance Greentech 5dr Silver 20412 miles	£6,495
14/64	Seat Ibiza Toca 3dr White 28000 miles	£6,495

15/15	Swift SZ 3Dr HAT 1.2 SZ2 Boost Blue 13500 miles	£6,495
14/64	Nissan Note Acenta 5dr White 15000 miles	£6,999
18/67	Celerio 5Dr HAT 1.0 SZ2 Mineral 10 miles	£6,999
11/61	Mini Cooper Coupe Grey 40236 miles	£7,295
13/62	Ford Fiesta Titanium Black 31688 miles	£7,395
14/64	Fiat 500 S Red 20300 miles	£7,395
14/14	Fiat 500I Trekking Multijet Beige 42826 miles	£7,495
15/15	Swift SZ3 5dr Silver 9283 miles	£7,495
15/65	Toyota Aygo X-Pression Vvt-I 5dr Blue 21000 miles	£7,495
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15/15	Swift 5Dr HAT 1.2 SZ3 Boost Blue 12000 miles	£7,999
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15/65	Renault Captur Dynamique Nav Dci 5d Black Anthracite 10481 miles	£9,798
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15/15	Suzuki Jimny Sz4 White 8585 miles	£12,999
12/62	Audi Q3 Se Tdi Black 48084 miles	£13,295
18/18	PRE REG SX4 S-Cross 1.0 SZ4 Boosterjet Superior 10 miles	£13,999
18/67	S-cross 1.0 Boosterjet 1.0 SZ4 Superior 10 miles	£13,999
15/15	Nissan Qashqai N-Tec + Dci 5dr Red 22468 miles	£14,495
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18/18	Swift SZ 5Dr HAT 1.0 SZ5 Boosterjet Super Bl 10 miles	£14,999
18/67	Vitara 1.6 Ddis Sz-t Superior 745 miles	£17,999
17/67	Kia Optima 2 Isg Crdi Black 2081 miles	£18,495
12/62	Land Range Rover Evoque Pure T Grey 51362 miles	£20,495
16/16	Bmw 225i Xdrive M Sport Auto 5dr White 7640 miles	£22,495
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VAUXHALL

Skoda to the four! Quartet of awards

By Sharon Walters

Skoda has once again proved itself to be the brand to beat by dominating the 2018 DieselCar and EcoCar Top 50. The Czech brand was named as class winner in no fewer than four key categories and topped more sectors than any other manufacturer in the influential annual chart.

Now in its third year, the DieselCar and EcoCar Top 50 is widely regarded as a definitive guide to the best cars on the market. The chart is compiled from data and feedback from a team of writers who have tested more than 175 cars during the past year. All have been road tested in the UK, and judged against the expectations and demands of their target market.

The Kodiaq added to its incredible list of industry titles by topping the Large SUV category – eclipsing some of the biggest names in the sector in the process. Explaining the Kodiaq's appeal, Ian Robertson, editor and publisher DieselCar & EcoCar Magazine said: "Despite undercutting key rivals, the big Skoda offers more performance and practicality at a lower price and with smaller running costs. This five and seven-seater drives brilliantly, comes with the option of advanced four-wheel drive to keep you going and is filled to the roof rails with clever features like pop-out door protectors."

Not to be outdone, the Superb grabbed two awards: Best Large Car and Best Large Estate. As with the Kodiaq, the judging panel loved the Superb's value and practicality. "The pricing of this limousine-like model defies belief, with so much room in the back you might feel tempted to change your wardrobe



Octavia was named the Best Medium Estate



Superb grabbed Best Large Car and Best Large Estate

and don a smart black suit," said Ian. "Its size, torquey engines and smooth manual or automatic gearboxes make the Superb a superlative tow car, and it's in its element on the motorway. If you aren't an SUV enthusiast, the Superb is a great antidote and yet still hugely spacious."

Completing a remarkable haul for Skoda,

the Octavia was named Best Medium Estate, marking a lock-out of the large Estate market for the brand. Substantially updated last year, the Octavia wowed the judges with its strength in depth. Explaining why it took top honours Ian Robertson said: "Making up around a third of Skoda sales, the Octavia is a critical model for the Czech brand, so it's a

good job the latest update has been such a success. The estate has a class-leading boot and the vRS performance version is powerful and grippy without attracting any unwanted attention. No wonder Octavia owners are so happy."

Thanks to the new Kodiaq's 17th place finish, no fewer than five Skoda models featured in

the Top 50 – a remarkable achievement and testament to the value for money delivered by the brand's efficient diesel models.

These latest Diesel Car and EcoCar awards add to a vast collection of silverware already accumulated by the Kodiaq, Superb and Octavia. The former has taken more than 10 top industry titles since its launch last March.



The Kodiaq topped the Large SUV category – eclipsing some of the biggest names in the process



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New 'ultimate' road car – the Lotus Exige Sport 410

Lotus has announced yet another new addition to its Exige range – the Exige Sport 410, which slots between the Sport 350 and Cup 430 in the British brand's model line-up.

The Sport 410 has been developed from the track-focused Cup 430, Lotus says, giving it 'unrivalled' driving dynamics and a degree of motorsport prowess courtesy of true downforce – up to 150kg – and low weight.

Supercharged

Lotus says this is the lightest V6 model ever. Weighing in at just 1,054kg, the Exige Sport 410 has a power-to-weight ratio of 389bhp per tonne – higher than a McLaren 570S.

Power comes courtesy of Lotus' 3.5-litre supercharged V6 engine, which in this form develops 410bhp and 420Nm of torque.

Top speed is a reported 180mph, and 0-60mph is despatched in just 3.3 seconds.

The Sport 410 gains the track-focused chassis from the Cup 430, but with the adjustable dampers tuned for a road bias. On request, Lotus can tune the entire chassis to customer taste, including adjustable compression and Elbach front and rear anti-roll bars.

An impressive 150kg of downforce is provided by a revised aerodynamic configuration including carbon side pods and rear wing plus a front splitter to reduce turbulence around the front wheels.

The cabin receives Lotus' now-



Lotus says this is the lightest V6 model ever with a power-to-weight ratio higher than a McLaren 570S

trademark open-gate manual gearbox plus carbon-fibre sports seats trimmed in Alcantara and leather.

The truly hardcore can specify track-ready touches, such as airbag-deletion from the steering wheel, four-point racing harnesses, a roll cage and inbuilt fire extinguisher.

The Lotus Exclusive programme allows buyers to customise their cars, tailoring the character of their Lotus precisely to their taste.

It's the ideal way to ensure your Exige Sport 410 stands out from the crowd.

The Lotus Exige Sport 410 starts from £85,600 in the UK.



Wolves players celebrate their promotion in 1988



Steve Bull celebrates with the Fourth Division trophy

Golden promotion – and glory in 1988

SPORTING FEATURE

By Joseph Masi

“For us, it was the highlight of the season to be able to celebrate in front of our own fans.”



Holding trophy aloft – Ally Robertson



Boss Graham Turner

THEY have swept aside all their rivals to clinch an historic return to the Premier League.

But 30 years ago, Wolves were celebrating a different promotion – and one that played a huge part in shaping the club we know today.

It was back on May 2, 1988, that a 2-0 win over Hartlepool saw the Molineux men clinch the Fourth Division Championship.

Having failed to win promotion the previous year, the pressure was on Graham Turner's side to lift the club from the doldrums. And they managed to achieve their goal with a game to spare by securing victory over the monkey hangers.

In front of 17,895 fans at Molineux – the biggest gate of the season, two goals from Steve Bull clinched the title. But Wolves kept their fans waiting with the second of the striker's goals arriving two minutes into stoppage time.

Thriller

Overall, the game hadn't been a thriller. Keeper Mark Kendall was knocked unconscious after colliding with the post three minutes from time. That saw defender Floyd Streete see out the match in goal.

But otherwise, the two Bull goals were the only moments of quality.

That didn't bother Turner though who was just happy to get over the line.

“Anybody who turned up expecting to see a good game would have been disappointed,” he said.

“But anyone who turned up to witness the celebration of the Wolves revival will have thoroughly enjoyed it.

“For us, it was the highlight of the season to be able to celebrate in front of our own fans.

“Neither the game nor performance were important, but the result certainly was.”

A Wolves revival it certainly was. Just three weeks later, Wolves were celebrating again when they won the Sherpa Van Trophy.

Then the following year they clinched a second successive promotion by beating Sheffield United to the Division Three title.



Celebrating – Floyd Streete with Mark Kendall

Evening with World Cup hero Sir Geoff

AN evening with England World Cup football legend Sir Geoff Hurst is due to take place at Molineux. Scorer of that famous hat-trick in the 1966 final, Sir Geoff, now aged 76, will be on stage on October 25.

Sir Geoff made his name with West Ham before moving on to Stoke and later Baggies towards the end of his career in this country. He scored 24 goals in 49 England appearances.

The evening starts at 6.30pm for VIP holders, and an hour later for those with standard tickets.

The admission includes a three-course meal and charity auction.

As well as Sir Geoff, England 1966 World Cup winning goalkeeper Gordon Banks and Black Country comedian Jonny Cole will also appear.

It will be hosted by BBC WM's Daz Hale. Funds raised during the evening will support Help for Heroes.

For tickets or further information go to cpeventsafety.com and click on Upcoming Events.

Former Monmore rider Francis dies

FORMER Wolverhampton and Cradley Heathens rider Cyril Francis has died. Born in Newport, Gwent, in 1935, Francis took up speedway at Bristol in 1960 but came to Monmore Green as Wolverhampton reopened in 1961.

He was a vital part of the Wolves team who won the Provincial League in 1963, scoring 147 points in 28 meetings in that memorable season.

He went to Newport in 1967, but had a short period back at Monmore Green in 1969. Francis retired in 1973 after spells with Cradley Heath, Ellesmere Port and Stoke.

In his seven seasons at Monmore Green, he scored 1,035 paid points in 180 meetings. He is one of just 25 riders to have scored more than 1,000 points for Wolverhampton.

Meanwhile, Jacob Thorssell made the semi-final in the Premiership Riders Championship meeting at Wimborne Road, which was won by Jason Doyle.

Woffy is set to end his GB team exile

TAI WOFFINDEN, Great Britain's double world champion, is to make himself available for a sensational return for his national side in this summer's Monster Energy FIM Speedway of Nations.

Woffinden sat out last year's World Cup campaign but has moved to end his exile after being overwhelmed with the level of support he received when meeting fans at stage shows in Halifax and Berwick in February, as well as holding talks with officials.

“When I did three shows in Berwick and Halifax the fans were asked to put their hands up if they wanted to see me ride for GB again,” he said. “And when I saw every single person put their hand up I couldn't believe it, it was really cool to see and it got me thinking.

“I don't want my British fans to think I have ever forgotten about them, but I needed to take some time out and having the year out has obviously worked as changes are being made, the type of things I have been pushing for over the last five years.”



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Thriller for DKs ends in heartbreak

A CRACKING game to end the season but dismay for Dudley Kingswinford as Syston's 37-33 victory saw them progress to Midlands Premier.

For the neutral the game was certainly spectacular with each side scoring five tries and the lead changing hands on seven occasions but a cruel blow to DK's, who had home advantage.

After the visitors took the lead, Garth Bown in his first league game of the season put in a sublime reverse kick which was collected by Nick Adams who touched down to cut the arrears.

Connah Jones was through and over the line for a try with Sam Vaughan adding the extras to see DK 12-10 in the lead before Syston hit back with a penalty and went into half time 13-12 up.

They were further ahead 20-12 to Syston before Vaughan scored near the posts and added the extras himself to haul DK back to within a point.

DK were again falling behind until Danny Hawkins crashed through to score a try, and the conversion by Vaughan saw DK into the lead 26-25.

The lead changed hands again until DK were back in the lead going into the last five minutes, when second row Matt Perks crashed over, following a break made by right wing Tommy Walker, with Vaughan on target DK in the lead 33-30.

Then, with three minutes to go, it was heartbreak for DK when a turnover saw the DK defence exposed and the Syston wing flying for the line too secure the win 37-33.

It's home success for Grace under pressure at pool

HAVING started the season in fine form by winning the opening round of the Nuneaton Junior League, Halesowen swimmers had plenty of confidence going into round two held at their home pool, Halesowen Leisure Centre.

The standard was noticeably higher than round one and, despite a vocal home support, Halesowen finished a tough evening of swimming in fourth place.

In the face of stiff competition race wins were at a premium. Ten-year-old Grace Guy provided the only individual race wins for Halesowen securing victory in the two length backstroke and one length butterfly.

The 12 year boys' relay team of William Walker, Jacob Smith, Jack Everton, Anthony Demitry and Jacob Fellows were dominant, comfortably winning both the freestyle and medley relays.

There was an encouraging debut from nine-year-old Philippa Ranasinghe.

Stratford Sharks came first at 239, then Bromsgrove 173, Wyre Forrest 170, Halesowen 163, Wombourne 151, Coalville 147.

Rutter aims to be Zero hero at TT



Michael Rutter

BRIERLEY Hill-born racer Michael Rutter will be sure of an electric reception on the Isle of Man this year after bagging a ride in the TT Zero.

The 46-year-old has been snapped up by Honda's Team Mugen for the 2018 race, from May 26 to June 8.

His place, however, was tinged with sadness as the position only became available after popular New Zealander Bruce Anstey, winner of the two previous electric bike races, was forced to

withdraw from all racing during 2018 while he undergoes medical treatment for a serious illness.

Twenty-three times TT winner John McGuinness, a good friend of Rutter's, has also been forced to withdraw from the Shindhen programme after suffering a setback as he recovers from a horror break last year at the North West 200, having re-fractured the same leg.

Team Mugen has comfortably won the last three TT Zero races, which is one lap

of the 37.73-mile Isle of Man TT course.

The last person to win on a different machine was Rutter, who claimed a third-straight win back in 2013 while riding for the MotoCzysz team.

He has been victorious every time he has competed on an electric bike and will form part of two-man team, joining up with Northern Ireland's Lee Johnston.

Rutter said: "It's a great opportunity but obviously its horrific circumstances behind how it all came about."

'Not good enough' says the captain

HALESOWEN found themselves in new territory when the recently promoted first team came up against relegated club Kidderminster at Chester Road.

After losing the toss Hales had to endure a Neil Pinner knock of some substance. The former Worcestershire and Leicestershire man plundered 123 off just 104 balls with five sixes.

Only Charlie Hartley (3-45) Dylan Ross-Watt (2-39) and Eddie Rhodes (2-42) were able to contain Kidder as they ended up on 245 from 50 overs. In reply Halesowen capitulated to 104 all out in a dismal batting display.

Afterwards captain Alexei Kervezee said: "That's not good enough for this division and we know it. We have to be more vigilant in our batting. To lose with 20 overs to spare only needing another 140 runs or so shows how far adrift we were. We will need to work harder and be straight back at it next week at Bridgnorth."

The second and third strings both won. The seconds bowled Pershore for 93 and knocked off the runs comfortably for a 10 wicket trouncing with Shaub Mohamed (63 not out) the main provider after Nathan Hines (4-35) and Archie Reeves (2-11) limited the Pershore batting. The third team played Romsley in a local derby with the visitors being routed for just 133. Shaz Gill 4-8 and Dan Ahmed 3-18 were the major wicket takers. In reply Halesowen coasted home thanks to Hayden Evans (47) and Richard Cox (26 not out) to win by six wickets.

Bowtell signs as cover for Heathens

CRADLEY have signed Lakeside racer Alfie Bowtell. He steps in as a replacement for Jordan Jenkins who crashed in a meeting at Birmingham and sustained a cracked vertebrae.

Motor Market Heathens boss Will Pottinger said: "Jordan will be a big miss for us. Unfortunately, he could be out for anything as long as three months."

Bowtell makes his Heathens debut at Monmore against Coventry on Monday.

Pottinger's National Trophy team ran out 37-22 winners at Stoke after referee Stuart Wilson declared the track unfit for racing after 10 races due to heavy rain.

STOURBRIDGE boss Gary Hackett praised the Glassboys' 'fantastic fans' after seeing his team end the season on a high by lifting the Birmingham Senior Cup.

Two goals from Luke Benbow saw Stourbridge triumph 2-1 over Hednesford in the final held at Birmingham's St Andrew's stadium last week.

The result meant Stourbridge lifted the trophy for the first time in 50 years – much to the delight of Hackett.

"I said before in the dressing room that we'd played 62 games, we hadn't won the cup for 50 years and it would be a great way to finish the season," the boss said.

"It's been a difficult season. But I'm absolutely delighted for everyone at the club. It's not just the players, the staff, it's for everybody."

"It was great for the fans. They've gone to Birmingham City and a Championship ground and seen Stourbridge win it for the first time in 50 years."

"We are used to some good times but twice in my tenure we've been beaten in the Birmingham Senior Cup final so I'm absolutely delighted."

Supporters

Hackett said he was particularly pleased for the club's supporters.

"The fans have been fantastic all season," he added. "Even at times when things haven't gone for us they have been behind us."

"I just knew we'd completely outnumber Hednesford. It lifted the players and the celebrations at the end were for them as well."

It was striker Luke Benbow who proved the difference between the sides at St Andrew's with the Glassboys talisman giving his team a first-half lead before then netting a winner in stoppage time after Pitmen had pulled level with a smart header from Charlie Gatt.



Luke Benbow (right) and Brad Birch lift the Birmingham FA Senior Cup after victory over Hednesford

Tipton Harriers dominate DK's 10k race

IT WAS Dudley Kingswinford's turn to play host to the other local clubs as the blue hoops invited athletes to join them at their annual DK10k road race, sponsored by LCP.

The opportunity to race over a testing course on closed roads always ensures that the race reaches capacity. It proved to be a successful night for athletes

from Tipton Harriers with the green and white hoops filling the top five places in the men's race and four of the top five in the ladies'. Peter Brookes claimed victory in a time of 31.56 from club mates Ian Williams in 33.14 and Stephen Corbisley in 33.51. Amie Williams won in 37.25 from Sally Ann Walker runner up in 39.02 and Elizabeth Wat-

ters, the only athlete capable of breaking Tipton dominance, placed third in 39.45.

Stuart Perkins led the blue hoops home finishing 11th in 36.30, Freddie Woodward was 52nd in 40.16, Simon Blizard 72nd in 41.16 and Helen Tromans finished in 93rd to claim first female back for the club with a time of 42.47.

★★★
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